

**Southeast Asia in  
the 9th to 14th  
Centuries**

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# Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries

edited by  
**David G. Marr and A.C. Milner**  
(with an introduction by Wang Gungwu)

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A ship from the carvings on the 8th century Buddhist temple at Borobudur, central Java. This is thought to represent a trading and passenger vessel utilizing the monsoon winds of the Java Sea in the period of the Javanese and Sumatran Kingdoms of 500–1000 A.D.

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## Preface

In May 1984, about forty historians, epigraphers, archaeologists, linguists and anthropologists convened at the Australian National University for four days to talk about early Southeast Asia. It was a refreshingly cosmopolitan encounter, at least four languages being spoken across the conference table, another six cropping up in the conference papers.

The outcome might have been a Southeast Asian tower of babel, with each specialist talking past the others. Fortunately, most participants came to Canberra eager not only to present the fruits of their most recent research, but also to evaluate the state of the field in general, and to engage in interdisciplinary and cross-regional discourse. To encourage such exchanges, conference organizers insisted that authors remain silent while their papers were introduced and reviewed by participants who were not specialists in the particular subject matter. Thus, a Javanist reviewed a paper on early Vietnam, a Malay specialist reviewed a paper on Arakan. Of course, authors took part in subsequent discussion and were permitted the final word. On the first morning some participants regarded the method with a certain trepidation, but by lunchtime it was clear we had an intellectually stimulating atmosphere in which the research materials themselves were being subordinated to the issues raised and the problems demanding further investigation. Towards the end of proceedings a number of scholars commented on how they had gained a better conceptual context for their own highly specific work.

Fortunately this spirit did not dissipate when scholars returned home, and has been captured in the revised papers published in this volume. Readers not familiar with the early history of the region will discover that Southeast Asia was a lively place in the ninth to fourteenth centuries, with extensive trade, bitter wars, kingdoms rising and falling, ethnic groups on the move, impressive monuments being constructed, and profound religious issues being debated. Readers vaguely aware of such grand Southeast Asian kingdoms as Angkor, Pagan, Majapahit, Champa or Dai Viet will see them take on colour and character. On the other hand, readers already well versed in the available literature will find that a number of contributors to this book are uncomfortable with established labels, asking

whether they oversimplify reality, or obscure important developments elsewhere in the region.

To push deeper and wider in early Southeast Asian history demands discussion of specific texts, authors, artefacts and concepts. These are the building blocks which allow analysis to reach beyond mere speculation. The editors of this volume urge readers not to be daunted by erudite passages. As students of nineteenth and twentieth century Southeast Asia, we share your difficulty. Nonetheless, amidst all the inscriptions, genealogies, poetic allusions and Old Javanese kinship terms, we are rewarded with a far better understanding of how people lived in Southeast Asia five hundred to one thousand years ago. Today's Southeast Asia cannot be comprehended without reference to those seminal developments.

This volume is directed not only at the regional specialist, however. As Wang Gungwu explains in the introduction, all of the contributors address questions which concern historians of many parts of the world. The student of history having no training in Southeast Asian studies will, we hope, find much of interest in the way the authors in this volume analyse the development and character of the early polity, the processes of culture contact, and the methodologies which might be most rewarding in the investigation of the historical records of a distant civilization.

In an endeavour of such complexity, it is impossible to name all the people who helped make it possible. Our first thanks go to the Departments of Pacific and Southeast Asian History and Far Eastern History at the Australian National University, which provided institutional support from the moment the conference idea was conceived to the day we sent off camera-ready text to the publisher. The Research School of Pacific Studies, ANU, and the ACLS/SSRC Joint Committee on Southeast Asia both responded generously to our applications for conference funding, thus enabling us to invite a number of participants from overseas. Jennifer Cushman and Jennifer Brewster helped to plan and implement the conference. Among the many other scholars who participated in the conference proceedings but are not represented in this volume, special mention and gratitude is extended to J.M. Gullick, Michael Aung Thwin, Christian Bauer, Peter Burns, E. Edward McKinnon, and Ian Proudfoot.

At the close of the conference, everyone agreed we must not allow the process of revision, editing and printing to delay dissemination of important findings for many years. Fortunately, most authors returned their revised manuscripts in reasonable time, and the editors received expert local assistance from a number of individuals. Jennifer Brewster, Ian Taylor, Claire Mandle, and Jacqui Parkinson shared copy-editing chores with us. Karen Haines devoted uncounted hours to preparation of the camera-ready text and diagrams, extracting every ounce of potential from our imperfect word-processing equipment, always trying to improve the consistency and aesthetic quality of printing and formatting. Triena Ong, Managing Editor of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, gave us valuable advice from the moment the ISEAS accepted the manuscript for publication.

# Introduction

Wang Cŭngwu

For several decades non-Western history has attracted a new breed of historian, who accepts that an interdisciplinary approach is essential to the study of the past. The traditional historian, who depends primarily on archival records, has of course accepted this approach when normal sources prove inadequate to deal satisfactorily with all the complex features of the past. For most modern periods, however, an interdisciplinary approach has had little appeal to the historian already faced with a superfluity of material in large and orderly archives. Only when it comes to the non-Western past has it been conceded that interdisciplinary studies might be necessary.

Pre-colonial Asia, Africa and the Americas, sadly without archives, could not be studied by historians at all without the help of other kinds of scholars. For this reason, most of the best-trained professional historians in the West either ignored the non-Western world entirely or limited themselves to the history of Western settlement or Western imperial and colonial enterprises outside Europe. The non-Western past was impossible to study by conventional historical methods because much of that past was by definition unhistorical. It consisted largely of exotic if not esoteric materials gathered by travellers, discoverers, missionaries, colonial administrators, even merchant-adventurers, and ultimately systematically recorded and explained by professional ethnographers and, for Asia and North Africa, by orientalist.

Despite questions about their dubious origins in Western expansionist history, both ethnographers and orientalist are descended from a highly respectable group of scholars, the classicists, whose broad, almost encyclopaedic tradition of learning may be traced back to the Greeks and Romans, the Arabs and then the Renaissance Europeans. The tradition still survives in some departments of classics in modern universities. Unfortunately, in recent times it has been regarded as a revered, but not greatly relevant, holistic approach towards knowledge, which may be still useful for the study of remote antiquity, but whose capacity to say anything new about that antiquity now depends mainly on the discoveries of the archaeologists.

However useful that classical tradition may have been in the past, it is not considered of much help for scholars today. The scholarly world increasingly believes that professional skills in well-established

modern disciplines are essential at the frontiers of knowledge. This applies to the study of the past as much as to the study of contemporary problems.

Increasingly, from the achievements of a multitude of scholars who have had to master many kinds of skills to deal with the history of cultures and civilisations other than their own, evidence is gathering to show that interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches have advanced our knowledge of the past for areas where professional historians have been unable to work. I am not referring here to the example of the *Annales* school of history, where the use of modern disciplines, including those of the natural and biological sciences and the social sciences, has greatly enriched our understanding of the dynamics of social and cultural change. Achievements there are primarily in areas where written and archival sources are dominant, and the new disciplines have served to widen the range of questions asked of these sources. Similarly, the belated use of similar disciplines in the study of Japanese and Chinese history has not brought about real advances in methodology. There, too, documentary sources abound, and advances in knowledge have come from re-examining the sources with new sets of questions stimulated by new academic disciplines.

Far more dramatic have been the achievements of those scholars who have focused on the pre-modern history of the Americas, Africa south of the Sahara, and South and Southeast Asia. Here the shortage of written sources has pushed students of history to depend more and more on the skills of anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists and art historians. Furthermore, a distinction can be made between Africa and the Americas on the one hand and the South and Southeast Asian regions on the other. Where the former is virtually devoid of indigenous written sources, the latter does offer some documents to satisfy classically trained historians, philologists, and scholars of *belles-lettres*; the skills of these scholars can in turn attract the attention of modern social scientists who are usually more concerned with literate and developed societies and polities. In short, South Asia and Southeast Asia are ideally placed to bring the maximum variety of traditional and modern scholarly skills together. Several scholarly books and articles during the past decade or so confirm that this conscious coming together of skills has been fruitful and the results remarkably encouraging.

This volume of essays on Southeast Asia takes another step forward in efforts to elucidate the pre-modern past through the integration of various scholarly skills. While these essays do not constitute a revival of the classical skills, they do demonstrate how these fine old skills can work together successfully with technically sophisticated new skills in order for progress to be made.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the beginnings of history in Southeast Asia had to be reconstructed by using the methods of epigraphy and philology on a small number of literate sources. During the twentieth century, sustained work by archaeologists and social anthropologists has opened wide the range of reconstructions possible. It has filled in many gaps in knowledge, as well as offering more sophisticated explanations for what we do know. Since the end of World War II, there have been further improvements in the methods of studying pre-literate and barely literate societies,

and scholars have been asked to re-examine their texts afresh in the light of what is now known about the nature of pre-modern societies around the world.

These developments in the study of Southeast Asia led to a major conference in London in 1974 to evaluate the results of new research and the application of new methods. That conference produced an excellent collection of papers, **Early South East Asia**, edited by Ralph Smith and William Watson (Oxford University Press, 1979). The volume confirmed the value of combining various techniques and disciplines for building a picture of the region's ancient history, and offered stimulating new perspectives on the two millennia before the tenth century AD. In particular, it showed to what extent the discoveries of the archaeologists have challenged the picture offered by the scant written sources, and how the new reconstructions of pre-modern societies by social anthropologists have refined the questions which need to be asked of those sources. The most dramatic successes have surfaced in work on prehistoric periods, notably findings about the origins of horticulture, agriculture and bronze metallurgy in mainland Southeast Asia. However, many gaps in the story remain, and much work still has to be done.

In the meantime, a later period in pre-modern Southeast Asian history has been under investigation by several groups of historians. Not surprisingly, their findings have been influenced by the methods of the social sciences, and they too challenge many of the interpretations accepted earlier this century. Among these, perhaps the most significant effort involves re-examination of the theme of 'Indianisation', and the extent to which exaggeration of that theme led to serious errors of interpretation of earlier archaeological materials. Another area of scholarly revision relates to ancient maritime trade, where the concern is to rectify a misleading picture of the region as merely a passage-way for foreign merchants, providing stopping-places and shelters for ships sailing between India, West Asia and China. Yet another reconsideration focuses on the nature of indigenous political structures, including the difficult problem of how states came into being, and how their evolution proved to be far different from the picture derived from the records kept by Chinese mandarins from afar. There remained, however, interesting differences in interpretation between the 'ancients' (those who looked forward from the earliest beginnings and depended mainly on archaeology) and the 'moderns' (those who turned backwards and concentrated on new written sources and on what re-reading the known texts could reveal).

These differences are manifested largely in an intermediate historical zone, where written sources are thin or fragmentary and where protohistoric archaeology is constantly finding materials which do not quite fit what has been preserved in writing. Broadly speaking, this coincides with the period chosen for the 1984 conference in Canberra, from which this volume of essays derives - the period between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. This is a zone into which both the 'ancients' and 'moderns' venture and occasionally meet, but it remains difficult, partly because archaeology has not revealed enough, partly because written sources have been either inadequate or too cursorily examined so far. Over the decades, four scholars have stood out in seeking to bridge the gaps - J.G. de Casparis, Oliver Wolters, Boechari and Paul Wheatley - and their distinguished contributions have

challenged others to re-examine all that has been said, especially about these intermediate six centuries. Indeed, it was the recent bold effort by Wolters to analyse the total range of evidence for a new explanation of what happened to early Southeast Asian states and cultures (in his book **History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives**, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1982) that led to the 1984 conference.

The organisers of the conference had begun with other plans. They were first interested in the border areas between mainland Southeast Asia and southwestern China. After reading Wolters' book, virtually as it came hot off the press from Singapore, they realised that he had taken the subject further afield and had set out some key questions about the continuities which make Southeast Asia a historical unity. Wolters not only focused on the time zone between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns', but also sought to reformulate the old image of the region as intermediate between India and China. His delineation of sub-regions was particularly helpful. Geographical zones within the region could now be discerned which were just as important as the well-known ones between Java-Sumatra and South and Southwest Asia, between the mainland valley states and India, and that with which the conference organisers started between the valley states and southern China. During the conference this fruitful approach encouraged discussion in depth of relationships among sub-regions, especially Java-Sumatra and the mainland valley states, the intermediate Malay peninsula areas, Cambodia and Champa, and between the latter two and Vietnam.

Wolters' ideas were used also to organise the conference along the themes of 'Polity', 'Localisation and Cultural Diversity' and 'Approaches'. His use of the **mandala** to characterise the nature of the region's polities provided an excellent start. The **mandala** concept questions received ideas about the 'state', about 'big men' and their kin, about what constitutes a 'dynasty'. It emphasises the precariousness and subtlety of relationships between centre and periphery, where force is inadequate, administrative structures non-existent, economic ties minimal. The first nine essays in this volume explore the many facets of this subject from different angles and at the same time demonstrate how the same questions can be usefully asked of at least four sub-regions: the three major ones of Java, Cambodia and Vietnam, plus the less familiar one at the neck of the Malay peninsula (Stargardt). Two papers emphasise factors which Wolters has always recognised but does not deal with extensively in his new book: both Vickery and Stargardt examine economic and technological factors which helped determine the nature of the polities in Cambodia and at Satingpra.

What is common to the remaining papers is particularly striking. Two points deserve attention. The first involves examination not only of changing images and perspectives through time, but also of changing structures, as, for example, in the process of state formation through local and regional phases to an 'imperial' phase (Kulke). While this is more true of the mainland valley states than elsewhere in the region, it nevertheless provides a useful test, especially as compared with the ebb and flow of power distribution in Java (Christie and de Casparis), or the spatial (maritime) mobility of the Malay world (Manguin). The second point relates to the position of Vietnam on the edge of the core areas of Southeast Asia. Bearing in mind the extent to which indigenous societies and cultures in Vietnam have, like those of Kwangsi and

Kwangtung, been submerged through the lack of interest among the compilers of Chinese historical records, three papers on Vietnam (Whitmore, Taylor and Ungar) bring out political, religious and symbolic features which should be familiar to those specialising in other parts of 'Indianised' Southeast Asia (as do the other three papers on Vietnam by Wolters, Tran Quoc Vuong and Guy).

The second major theme of the conference concerned 'localisation'. This raised the question of whether specific integrated local cultures existed prior to the coming of foreign cultural elements, and to what extent the latter were accepted, fractured and restated, or 'localised', by pre-existing local cultures. In the Southeast Asian context, where totally indigenous data have until recently been deemed non-existent for the historical periods, scholars were notorious for their readiness to consider almost anything they found in the region, including archaeological artifacts, to have come either from outside the region or to have been influenced by external cultural elements. This has been one of the great burdens which Southeast Asian historians have had to bear. Eight of the essays in this volume were written partly in response to the 'localisation' theme, and they certainly show how difficult it is, in an area of such cultural diversity, to distinguish indigenous from foreign elements in the integrated cultures which eventually emerged.

Perhaps the most probing question is that raised by Macknight, when he examines the eastern edges of the region, which have been regarded as deep in the shadows of whatever light may have come from India in the distant past. Do the cultures of the Eastern Islands constitute a dark intermediate zone between 'Southeast Asia' and the largely indigenous cultures of Oceania (especially the Pacific world of the Melanesian and Polynesian peoples)? Or does their very lack of definition constitute proof that all light emanated from India and the West, and that it was their distance from that source which left them in shadow? In sharp contrast, the two essays on Vietnamese culture and technology (Tran Quoc Vuong and Guy) show what happened when the light from China was strong and the local peoples had to struggle hard to defend their 'local genius'. In between are even more kinds of responses, all conspiring to make the question of 'localisation' too multifarious to be easily pinned down (see the sophisticated discussions by Vallibhotama, Mabbett and Fox). The process of localisation involved ecological differences, distance or proximity from a Great Tradition, elite and popular responses to spiritual needs, deeply rooted kinship structures, different uses of rituals and regalia, processes of urbanisation and, not least, technology and modes of production.

Despite all that, a sense of what the 'localisation' process meant does come through all the essays and we are left in no doubt that it is a refreshing concept helping us to re-assess the 'Indianisation' and 'Sinicisation' motifs of much early writing. And, in each of these eight essays, there are further successful challenges to the idea that everything significant in the region came from somewhere else.

The conference ended with three essays on the theme of 'Approaches'. Although this did not attract as many papers as the other two themes, the three essays, especially Wolters' own on the reading of a particular Vietnamese text, demonstrated that the time has come for historians of Southeast Asia to look at 'texts' as a means of understanding how people who lived in a particular time and place

saw the world around them and communicated their ideas to contemporaries.

This approach is not new, of course. The best traditions of philology demanded the elucidation of source materials in this way. But the present effort is informed by more sophisticated developments in linguistics. It also has the great merit for historians of challenging them to stop plundering surviving documents for facts before they know the meaning and context of the words they pick out, before they can appreciate the circumstances and environment in which the authors lived and the words were uttered. On this point, the well-known strictures of Jacques (and, earlier, of de Casparis) are underlined repeatedly. Also, with fine imagination, Worsley is able to demonstrate that 'texts' of stone (bas-reliefs, temples, even whole cities?) can be equally revealing of the kind of self-conscious localisation which we are trying to depict in words. Perhaps the most illuminating point coming out of the essays on localisation and on approaches, however, is that examples of Indian ideals being emptied of meaning and filled with Javanese experiences are restatements. This leads to the view that no monument or statue in Southeast Asia is unmistakably Indian, every one of them being restatements expressing indigenous needs.

It can now be said that Wolters' new book provided a valuable handle for a score of scholars to take another look at early Southeast Asia, to open themselves to other disciplines, to adopt a sub-regional and multi-centred view of the region instead of a holistic one and, not least, to read the 'texts' correctly and not anachronistically. Beyond that, we came to realise that our separation of 'polity' as an institution from 'localisation' as a process implies a priority historians tend to give to 'polity'. Historians are inclined to identify the institution before they analyse the process (of localisation, in this case) by which that institution was formed and, through such analysis, try to understand the processes by which the polity could thereafter induce more and greater 'localisation'. That is understandable because it is futile to speak of processes in the abstract. Nonetheless, perhaps we could be more explicit in recognising that each polity was itself the product of localisation, that in reality they are inseparable, two sides of the same thing. Several conference participants did emphasise in discussion that localisation was natural and inevitable (how quickly did the dynamic process overshadow the institution!), and that the most interesting questions were which parts of the Great Traditions were localised, and why. It is undeniable that, in most parts of the region, elements of the Great Traditions appear dominant in form. The question remains, however, why some Traditions had the capacity to transform indigenous cultural elements so that the effort to localise that Tradition simply led to the submergence of those indigenous elements, whereas other indigenous cultures were so integrated and distinct that the Great Tradition they localised survived merely superficially.

The historical process of localisation is obviously a difficult one to describe and explain. What makes it even more interesting is that it did not stop with Great Traditions, but occurred also within the region as something that might be called re-localisation. For example, Javanese and Khmer influences on Champa, reciprocal influences between the Mons and the Burmans, numerous local or localised strands that became woven into what is now Thai, all take us away from the



grand themes of 'Indianisation', and from large and often misleading categories such as 'China' and 'India' which have dominated so much of the literature on early Southeast Asia until recently.

There were suggestions at the conference that, by plotting on the map these examples of local localisations within the region, we would have a clearer picture of how each localised polity might have determined the shape and nature of another. Equally important would be a map showing how 'Indian materials', already transformed and adapted locally, might have been secondarily relayed from the point of entry to other sub-regions in Southeast Asia. Such maps might help to determine whether indigenous cultures were receptive to Indian influences or to influences within the region; the degree of receptivity could be an index of the basic unity of something described as Southeast Asian cultural foundations. On the contrary, if what was accepted in one sub-region differed markedly from that in another, that would be a useful pointer to underlying cultural differences within the region.

The question of mapping touches on the factor of geography as well as the question of boundaries. Several essays discuss matters of ecology and environment, notably Stargardt's paper on Satingpra and Manguin's paper on ships as bearers of change. They both mention mobility, in one the common phenomenon of moving capitals around at frequent intervals, and in the other the cultural traffic and the maritime trade across what Wolters calls 'the single ocean' between the Arab world and East Africa at one end, and China at the other. This raises four questions which I believe deserve further attention.

Firstly, moving capitals was common also to the ancient worlds of China, Japan and Europe. How different was it in Southeast Asia, and to what extent was its survival till so late in history a measure of strong local cultural values? There may be scope for additional studies of comparable cultural traits in the ancient history of several other parts of the world.

Secondly, apart from Manguin and Macknight, I think the essays play down the role of early maritime trade as a determinant of polity and the localisation process, especially that role which kept the region open to sustained influences from India and China. Perhaps the fact that Wolters himself, who has been a major contributor to our understanding of this topic, is quiet about it leads us to feel that enough has been said. Yet Kenneth Hall, whom we had not brought to the conference, in his latest book **Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia** (University of Hawaii Press, 1985), demonstrates how important this international maritime trade could be to all the issues of polity and localisation the essays focus on.

Thirdly, the cultural traffic over land clearly involved different processes of change from that by sea. Different kinds of barriers were erected, soldiers were a different breed from sailors, different items of trade influenced local cultures and, of course, those population centres which evolved deep in the interior necessarily contrasted with those at great trading ports. How different these processes were could be tested by comparing localisation in the valleys of Yunnan, in the upper reaches of the Irrawady, Salween, Mekong and even the Red River (where the Indian materials came more directly into competition with Chinese materials among people who might have been, like other Southeast Asians, more inclined to respond to the Indian), with whatever localisation there was across the seas to the Eastern islands of Indonesia, to the Philippines, New Guinea and beyond.

This leads to the fourth question, that of the boundaries of Southeast Asia. It was not long ago that what today we call Southeast Asia was either part of Eastern or Southern Asia; bits of it were lodged elsewhere, for example Burma as part of British India, Vietnam and the Philippines as parts of the Far East, and New Guinea simply forgotten. After 1945, Southeast Asia appeared like a new bright star whose time had come and, within a decade or two, we were speaking of Southeast Asia as if the name had always been there. Nevertheless, there remains the need to determine what, other than geographical tidiness and modern political realities, justifies the separate treatment of the history of the region since the work of Brian Harrison and D.G.E. Hall in the early 1950s. For the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, the boundaries are not so clearly defined. If Vietnam was less Chinese, then so also were Yunnan and parts of Kwangsi, Kueichow and Kwangtung. Where were the western borders of Burma? Should we be more open-minded about Sri Lanka and parts of the South India and Bengal coasts? And could the region be said to have possessed an eastern or northeastern boundary among the islands as early as that? I thought it useful that conference participants noted from time to time that local peoples during this period showed little consciousness of strong cultural commonalities. There was no sense of belonging to a region, and it is probably anachronistic to expect such feelings. Was that very lack of consciousness of boundaries itself a major common trait that distinguished the region from others?

Finally, the conference found so much of interest in the cultural variety of the area and the complexities of polity and localisation that it did not seem to give enough attention to the boundaries of the period of the ninth to fourteenth centuries. Why begin at the ninth and why end with the fourteenth? Several papers here are convincing in establishing that the ninth century was significant for Java, and to some extent also in pre-Angkorian Cambodia, because of the way that localisation and state formation laid the foundation for early kingdoms and for the 'imperial' kingdoms of the future. For both areas, however, Kulke suggests that the end of the tenth century and the beginnings of the eleventh might have been more important where changes to the polity were concerned; this was certainly true for Vietnam as well. At the other end of the period, Vallibhotama emphasises the fifteenth century as a period of major change for Thailand, and this would also apply to Angkor. But again, the fourteenth century might well have been the vital period for changes to the polity in the Java-Sumatra sub-regions.

Perhaps our reluctance to nail these centuries down at the conference shows that we have reached a certain stage of maturity in our study of early Southeast Asian history. We know enough to sense that these dates could not be equally relevant for every part of the region, yet not enough to determine what dates might be more significant for a region which we believe had an historical unity all its own. This new-found maturity has brought us not only to realise that interdisciplinary approaches are integral to our work and probably to all attempts to write history; it has also led us to reach deeper into some of the complexities of time and space in the non-Western past. We have travelled beyond the point where each of us believes in the possibility of writing a comprehensive history of that past.

# 1

## The Early and the Imperial Kingdom in Southeast Asian History

Hermann Kulke

The early States of Southeast Asia were equipped by modern historiography with more or less all Weberian criteria of a modern State. Accordingly, these early States were governed by the kings through a central administrative staff which was able to uphold successfully the legitimate claim of the monopoly of physical force within a given area.[1] Successful pillages of neighbouring areas were therefore often understood as annexations and rather vague tributary relations were interpreted as an indicator of the existence of an hierarchically-structured system of provinces and districts etc.

Let me illustrate this interpretation of early Southeast Asian history by two examples selected from two certainly "unsuspicious" authors whose works are still regarded as standard works. About early Funan L.P. Briggs wrote in the year 1951: "From a little river-settlement governed by a naked girl, to an empire more than a thousand miles in extent, with boundaries perhaps as wide as those of which the proudest Khmer Emperor could later boast, in less than two centuries, is no small achievement for any people in any period." [2] Recent research however, particularly by C. Jacques, has shown that nearly none of these statements can be accepted any longer as established facts. [3] Funan's history neither began as a river settlement under the legendary naked Naga princess, nor do we have any proof that the alleged conquests of the Funanese King Fan Shi-Man led to a permanent annexation of areas far beyond the Mekong and even Menam delta.

The other example refers to the famous quotation from the New History of the Tang about the kingdom of Holing which most probably was located in Java. The relevant passage in the *Hsin T'ang shu* is as follows: "on the borders [of Ho-ling] there are 28 small countries, all of which owe allegiance to Ho-ling. There are 32 great ministers and the Ta-tso-kan-hsiung is the chief of them." [4] Heine-Geldern, in his even more famous article on "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia", quoted this passage to illustrate the cosmic role of kings, courts and governments in Southeast Asia. But he also inferred from this passage "that the kingdom of Java in the 9th century was divided into twenty-eight provinces, their governors together with the four ministers having numbered thirty-two high officials.(...) It is clear that in all these cases the empire was conceived as an image of the heavenly world of stars and gods". [5] We shall come back later on

to the function of these cosmological speculations. What matters here is Heine-Geldern's obvious misinterpretation of the Chinese text when speaking of twenty-eight governors of the twenty-eight provinces of the Javanese empire. None of these words is mentioned in the text. Instead, it seems to be clear from the text that the ruler of Holing was the *primus inter pares* among a large number of ministers and that his State was surrounded by twenty-eight small tributary countries. They were in all probability a permanent threat to the authority of the central ruler rather than integrated provinces of an empire.

If we look at the standard works of Southeast Asian history - and certainly also of South Asian history - we may find quite a few other examples which show that some of the early "empires" of this region might well be the products of modern historiography rather than ancient history. And we may even come to the hypothetical conclusion that modern historians fell victim to a rather "sinister conspiracy" of ancient Indian and Chinese philosophers, historians and official scribes to conceal the historical truth, because it is well known that ancient Indian thinkers and their Southeast Asian contemporaries described the *śāstric* theory of the State, whereas the court poets and authors of the inscriptions primarily aimed at a mastery of the highly-sophisticated art of poetry. None of them therefore cared for a (detailed) description of, for example, the actual structures of a state and its real borders. On the other hand, Chinese official scribes of the *Hung lu ssū*, the office which was responsible for "the reception arrangements for foreign envoys and also the recording of details about their countries", [6] were certainly deeply interested in the actual situation among the "barbarians of the South". But in their reports, which they prepared for their emperor and which later on became available to historians, they "translated" the information not only into their own language but also into their own officialese. Its idiom was deeply pervaded by the Chinese conception of their own centralized State. According to O.W. Wolters, Chinese writers were thus "unable to conceptualize 'Funan' as being anything other than a 'state', albeit an unstable one, and, because of this Chinese perspective, 'Funan' has become the earliest Southeast Asian example of what sociologists refer to as a 'patrimonial bureaucracy', a model that does not seem to fit the prehistoric evidence". [7]

## II

Evidence provided by more recent prehistoric and proto historic archaeological research shows "that by the beginning of the Christian era a patchwork of small settlement networks of great antiquity stretched across the map of Southeast Asia". [8] It is particularly this new evidence, [9] and an increasing awareness of its relevance for an evaluation of the historical period of Southeast Asia combined with a hitherto unknown open-mindedness on the part of historians to anthropological theories, that has initiated a process of far-reaching and even radical reconsideration of the early history of Southeast Asia. Thus we are no longer able to think in terms of a "transplantation theory" which starts out from the assumption that a ready-made (Indian) concept of State and statecraft was "transplanted" [10] to the virgin soil of Southeast Asia. Instead, two problems, amongst others, have become major issues of current research. Firstly, not "indianization" but "indigenization" or "localization" [11] of foreign influences have become

key-words of research. And secondly, another major focus of research is the persistency of indigenous, prehistoric "pre-State" structures throughout history.

"Multiplicity of centres" has become another key-word and a helpful tool for analytical research on the early State in Southeast Asia. For pre-Angkorian Cambodia, for instance, O.W. Wolters noticed that the "evidence reflects the multiplicity of regional centres in the land which, for convenience, we call 'Cambodia'. And he concluded that "in this situation the term 'kingdom' [...] is an inappropriate one. Greater unities were still only the fragile consequence of the prowess of an individual leader. This kind of unity quickly dissolved when an overlord died or lost the confidence of his allies".[12] In Java, scholars like F.H. van Naerssen spoke of a "polykraton concept of the Hindu-Javanese period"[13] and inferred from epigraphical evidence that during the early Javanese period till the late 9th century A.D., "there were several independent rulers, some of them enjoying the title *mahārāja* and others without that title".[14] And Boechari even concluded that "what remained unchanged during the whole [old-Javanese] period was that there never had been a centralized government. The kingdom was divided into a number of autonomous areas, governed by *rakais* or *rakryans* [who] could act independently from the king".[15]

The concept of a "multicentred political system" is certainly a most necessary new approach which provides, perhaps for the first time in Southeast Asian historiography, a framework for an analytical study of the actual structure of the early State in Southeast Asia. It seems to be of particular relevance for a study of early historical political systems as they are known, for instance, from Chena[16] or in Burma during the pre-Pagan period and larger parts of the pre-Singhasari history. To my knowledge this concept, however, has rarely been applied to the larger States of Southeast Asia during the 9th to 14th centuries. It was O.W. Wolters who again took the lead in this discussion. In a chapter on "Historical Patterns in Intra-regional Relations" in his recent work on "Southeast Asian Perspectives" he introduced the *maṇḍala* concept of ancient Indian political literature into the discussion about the structure of the larger States of pre-colonial Southeast Asia.

"The map of earlier Southeast Asia which evolved from the prehistoric networks of small settlement and reveals itself in historical records was a patchwork of often overlapping *maṇḍalas*, or 'circles of kings'. In each of these *maṇḍalas*, one king, identified with divine and 'universal' authority, claimed personal hegemony over other rulers in his *maṇḍala* who in theory were his obedient allies and vassals. [...] In practice, the *maṇḍala* (Sanskrit term used in Indian manuals of government) represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries and where smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security. *Maṇḍalas* would expand and contract in concertina-like fashion. Each one contained several tributary rulers, some of whom would repudiate their vassal status when the opportunity arose and try to build up their own networks of vassals. Only the *maṇḍala* overlord had the prerogative of receiving tribute-bearing envoys; he himself would despatch officials who represented his superior status." [17]

Wolters explains his *maṇḍala* concept with a "glance at some of the famous *maṇḍalas* which adorn the textbooks on earlier Southeast Asian history". The Thai-kingdoms of Ayudhya and Bangkok, the Sriwijayan *mandala* ("the notorious uncertainty about its geographical span and political identity is a striking instance of the amorphous nature of the great *maṇḍalas* in earlier Southeast Asian history", p.22), the Philippines and the Javanese *maṇḍala* of Majapahit. In all these cases the development of these famous *maṇḍalas* "depended on the waxing and waning of particular *maṇḍala* centres [...] which never led to new and more enduring political systems. [...] The single exception to an otherwise ephemeral political scene is that part of the Angkorian *maṇḍala* which comprised the Khmer-speaking people".[18]

It is this notion of a persistency of prehistoric elements as the dominant structural feature even of the larger states of early Southeast Asia which will be the focal point of the present paper. The period which covers roughly the millenium between 500 and 1500 A.D. is the period in which the results of more recent historical research differ most radically from those of the earlier or "conventional" historiography, both in India and Southeast Asia. Let me explain this by a few examples. The different interpretation of the mediaeval Indian State under the Cōḷas and the Pālas by Nilakanta Sastri and R.C. Majumdar on the one side, and by Burton Stein and R.S. Sharma on the other are as symptomatic of this controversy in the context of Indian historiography[19] as are the different interpretations of the States of Funan and Śrīvijaya by L.P. Briggs and G. Coedès on the one side and by C. Jacques and Bennet Bronson on the other in the context of Southeast Asian historiography.[20] The basic difference between the earlier and the more recent historiography is the contradictory estimation of the role and structure of the early State. These two "schools" ascribe a very different position to the early State in a continuum of governance formations from a tribal or "stateless" form of government to a unitary centralized "empire state". The conventional school places the early State in the final position of this continuum of pre-modern State formation. But its adherents never really analysed the socio-economic basis of the process which led to the emergence of the early State. They took it more or less as a given fact derived either from an earlier state or from models of theoretical *śāstra* texts. Contemporary historiography with its anthropological models on the other hand ascribes a position to the early State which is much lower down the scale than the unitary State of the conventional school. Mainly on the basis of anthropological models it is assumed that the early State developed "from below". But this development reached only a certain level which, because of inherent structural problems, the early State was unable to transcend.[21]

A third school which plays an influential role in contemporary Indian historiography is the Marxist influenced "Indian School of Feudalism".[22] According to this school, the Hindu State of early mediaeval India was the result of a continuous process of fragmentation of a former unitary State through feudalization. This fragmentation was caused "by the wide-spread practice of granting big and small territories to vassals and officials who entrenched themselves territorially and ended up as independent potentates".[23] From an analytical point of view, the anthropologically-oriented historiography and the School of Indian Feudalism come to rather similar conclusions. The main

structural feature of the early State is the above-mentioned "multiplicity of centres" which was responsible for the obviously insurmountable political stagnation. Both schools however differ completely in their explanation of the historical process out of which the early State of the whole region emerged.

As a former student of Indology I was trained to look at the early State in India and Southeast Asia from the "religious point of view" and to study the "Hindu political thought and its metaphysical foundations".[24] But the results of intensive fieldwork in the Hindu-tribal frontier in Eastern India, particularly in Orissa,[25] and later on in Java, convinced me of the inadequacy of this approach for a study of the process of state formation in India and Southeast Asia. I began to understand the early State as a result of a continuous process "from below". And I was fascinated by the "discovery" of many "pre-State" elements, because they had either been completely neglected by ancient *Dharmaśāstras* and modern textbooks alike, or discarded as mere pre-historic relics, rather than accepted as constituent structural elements of the early historical state. But in the course of my further research, and particularly through reading the relevant anthropologically-oriented historical studies,[26] I was beginning to doubt the applicability of the anthropologically-oriented models for the whole process of pre-modern State formation in India and Southeast Asia, particularly the larger States of these regions. As a consequence of these doubts I drafted a conceptual framework which tries to differentiate between several distinct phases and which reveals a decreasing applicability of these models. Although these different phases were part of an overall (though not homogeneous) process of state formation, the respective State of each of these phases faced different structural problems and developed different means to cope with them.

### III

As I have shown elsewhere,[27] the process of state formation usually passed through three successive phases, i.e. the local, regional and imperial phases or levels. Very generally speaking, the first step always had to be the successful establishment and consolidation of a solid local power within a limited territory. In many cases this power might have been founded by a "big man" or "man of prowess"[28] but usually it led to the establishment of a new form of control over a clan or tribe by a privileged lineage and its "elder" or leader. Chieftaincy is usually the term which is used for this pristine level of political development. It is characterized by the absence of any sort of institutionalized bureaucracy. Yet its authority had to be based on the legitimation to extract, at least temporarily, socially-produced surpluses from the surrounding land, and to mobilize men even from outside the leader's own lineage in order to protect the land and its own position. Anthropologists have shown that nearly all tribal societies provided a legitimate societal framework for the establishment of these chieftaincies.[29] It is unnecessary to point out that it is this early period of state formation in Southeast Asia where anthropological models are most important and helpful for an analytical study. In fact, without these models historians often seem to over-interpret or even misinterpret the very few sources we possess about this early period.

The process of state formation entered the second or regional state when the leader of the "nuclear areas"[30] of local power was able to extend his authority beyond its territorial borders. This phase usually began with the military conquest of one or several neighbouring local nuclear areas. But during this period military conquest neither led to the annihilation or replacement of the existing political authorities, nor to a direct unification of these newly conquered areas with the centre. The defeated leaders were usually reinstalled as tributary chiefs. But this second step involved much more than a mere military conquest which, moreover, was usually only temporary. It required the establishment of permanent and legitimate relations with the conquered areas and their leaders.

Two inscriptions from Java and Orissa in Eastern India are particularly informative with regard to the emergence of local chieftains to early *rājās*. [31] Best known is of course King Mūlavarman through his famous Yūpa inscriptions of Kutei in East Kalimantan which are dated palaeographically to about 400 A.D. In a few lines they describe, better than any other known documents of this period, the rise of a family within three generations. The grandfather Kuṇḍuṅga, though already called "Lord-of-men" (*narendra*), still bore a purely indigenous name. It was Kuṇḍuṅga's son who assumed the name Aśvavarman and became known as the founder of the dynasty (*vaṃśa-kartr*). His son Mūlavarman was the first to bear the title *rājā*. He performed great sacrifices, and donated immense wealth, land and many cows to Brāhmaṇas "who had come here" (*iha-āgata*) as is explicitly mentioned in one of the inscriptions. He ruled over his *kraton* (called *pura* in this Sanskrit inscription) which he illuminated magnificently. But most important for our discussion, Mūlavarman, as the son of the founder of a ruling local lineage (*vaṃśa*), initiated the second stage of early state formation. He defeated other landlords (*pārthiva*) and made them "tribute givers" (*kara-dā*). The use of the title *pārthiva* in this connection seems to be very significant. Of course, it is often translated as "prince" or even "king". But more than most other conventional royal titles, *pārthiva* has the original meaning of a landholder (*pārthiva* = earthly, coming from the earth). *Pārthiva* thus designates exactly the local landlord whom we know from Java as *raka*. Mūlavarman obviously had defeated several of them in his neighbourhood, but he confirmed them in their legitimate local rights on the condition that they "give" (*dā*) tribute (*kara*).

From the other side of the Bay of Bengal we know another interesting example of the rise of an autochthonous leader during the same period. It comes from Southern Orissa, from one of the typical riverine nuclear areas of early state formation and relates to the origin of the Śailodbhava dynasty, which once had wrongly been identified as the progenitors of the Śailendras of Java. [32] Several inscriptions of the later Śailodbhava kings relate to the story of Pulindasena, a famous man of Kalinga who was tired of ruling the world. On his request the Great God granted a boon to him and created a new king out of pieces of a rock (*śilā-śakala udbhedī*). Pulindasena named him Śailodbhava ("one whose origin is the mountain") and thus founded the dynasty (*parikalpita-vaṃśa*). [33] Both names, Pulindasena and Śailodbhava, point to a tribal origin of the dynasty. The Pulindas are a well-known tribe of Central India. [34] Pulindasena, who bears no royal or princely title, therefore may well have been a military



chief (*sena*) of this tribe settled near the famous Mahendragiri, which in the inscriptions is called the "Great Family Mountain" (*bṛhat-kula-giri*). Pulindasena's successor adopted a Sanskrit name and became the founder of a local dynasty after leaving his hilly homelands and settling in (or conquering?) the fertile valley of the Rishikulya.[35] The inscriptions, however, leave no doubt that it took several generations till they were able to consolidate their rule in the riverine nuclear area and to perform their first great horse sacrifice.

Traditional equalitarian chieftaincies did not usually provide a legitimation for this new type of domination. It is most likely that in exactly this situation Hinduism and the idea of the universal Hindu ruler within a very limited territory began to spread to many countries on both sides of the Bay of Bengal. The idea of Hindu kingship provided an institutional framework and a new ideological legitimation for an already existing indigenous political development. And, as we already know from the slightly earlier development in India, Hinduism at that time was perhaps the most adaptive religious and social system which was open to many aspects of "localization". But it is certainly correct to argue that legitimation was not the only attraction of Hinduism for tribal leaders. As pointed out by Wolters, Hinduism must have been particularly attractive for "men of prowess" because of its highly developed system of magical power derived from meditation (*tapas*).[36]

The early State which emerged from this struggle among several "nuclear areas" and their "men of prowess" will be called the Early Kingdom. Its leader usually acquired a new title, e.g. *Rājā* or even *Mahārāja*. But, despite the various royal paraphernalia which surrounded these new *rājās* and their courts, they remained basically a *primus inter pares* among the local leaders throughout this period. The structural weakness of this political system was the precarious position of the *rājā*. His tributary chiefs outside his own nuclear area were often of the same stock and had therefore, at least theoretically, the same chances to become a *rājā* once they were able to prove their own "prowess".

The political system of these "early kingdoms" was characterized by a "multiplicity" of local political centres and shifting loyalties of their leaders, particularly at the periphery of their system. In the context of these early kingdoms Wolters is certainly right when he states that "the king's status was unique only because it was a religious one".[37] And in the context of this early stage of development I certainly agree with B. Stein who wrote about the later Cōla State of South India that it was only the "ritual sovereignty which converted a congeries of local political systems into a segmentary state".[38] And, as already mentioned, it is particularly this period to which I would suggest to apply Wolters' *maṇḍala* concept.

#### IV

The numerous Early Kingdoms with their precarious balance of power, shared by the central authority of a *primus inter pares* and the centrifugal local polities, were certainly the dominant feature of the political map of Southeast Asia throughout the first millennium A.D. At the end of this period, however, a new development began which changed this political map considerably during the first centuries of

the second millennium. During this period a small number of supra-regional powers emerged which dominated the whole area. This process began in the early 9th century in Angkor which dominated larger parts of continental Southeast Asia from the 11th to the early 13th centuries. About a hundred years later this role was taken over by the Thai kingdom of Ayudhya. From the middle of the 11th century until the end of the 13th century Pagan ruled over larger parts of western continental Southeast Asia. And after two only temporarily successful attempts in the 9th century under the Śailendras and the Mataram dynasty, and under Airlangga in the 11th century, Java joined in during the 13th century under Singhasari and became the leading power of the islands under Majapahit in the 14th century. Only Śrīvijaya in the western "Insulinde" and Campa in the eastern part of continental Southeast Asia remained unchanged. It would certainly be interesting to know whether the complete disappearance of these two polities from the political map of Southeast Asia was at least partly caused by their unchanging structure in contrast to the new emerging powers of Pagan, Angkor, Majapahit and Vietnam. These States will be called Imperial Kingdoms.

It is of course a justifiable question whether these states were an "exception to an otherwise ephemeral political scene", as Wolters described even the case of Angkor.[39] Or to put it into other words: was the difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms only a temporary and territorial expansion? Did perhaps even Angkor thus remain just an enlarged version of Chenla, and do we have to depict the State of Majapahit in equal terms with the State of Kadiri? Another possibility to explain the existence of these Imperial Kingdoms is the assumption that some structural changes took place in Southeast Asia around 1000 A.D. which enabled few imperial "men of prowess" to transcend the limitation of the Early Kingdom and to initiate a third or imperial phase of state formation in Southeast Asia. The answer to these questions depends on how much evidence can be brought forward in favour of either a basically unchanging continuity of "pre-State structures", or in favour of a structural change. In the context of this paper I shall emphasize indicators and possible reasons for this change.

The first and perhaps most obvious change was the new territorial dimension of the Imperial Kingdoms. But it was not a mere enlargement of the area of the former Early Kingdom. The significantly new feature was that the empire was based territorially on the forcible unification of two or even several core areas of former independent Early Kingdoms. And it was no longer a matter of subordination of the former "regional" leaders of these annexed areas but their complete extinction as autonomous authorities. Usually they were replaced by members of the central dynasty or by deserving persons from the administrative or military staff. Only by a considerable and permanent enlargement of the core area, to which the imperial dynasty had direct and uncontested access (in order to legitimately tap its resources), was an Imperial Kingdom of this third phase able to last longer than the lifetime of a "man of prowess".

## V

This process is perhaps best discernible in the early history of Angkor[40] and in eastern Java. The history of East Java is

characterized by a sequence of several futile and very few successful attempts to unify the whole of Eastern Java under one dynasty and thus to establish an East Javanese empire. The rule of King Sindok in the early 10th century, King Airlangga in the early 11th century, and the kingdoms of Singhasari and Majapahit after 1222 A.D. are usually accepted as periods of successful unification of Eastern Java. Epigraphical evidence, however, proves that the region under the direct control of Airlangga (1016-1049) was more or less restricted to the delta region of the Brantas and Solo rivers and their adjacent areas. Though he was able to establish himself as the most powerful ruler of East Java, it was only this nuclear area of his Early Kingdom where his inscriptions have been discovered and where, most probably, his still unidentified capital Kahuripan was situated. Although he claims in an inscription in the year 1041 to have conquered the Southern region, which he contemptuously calls "utterly uncivilized" or literally "unaryanized" (*adhika-anaryya*),[41] he was never able to occupy or even annex the other two nuclear areas of Eastern Java around Kaḍiri/Blitar and Singhasāri. Hence the alleged division of the whole of Eastern Java by Airlangga into Janggala and Panjalu refers only to a division of his own Early Kingdom in the delta region, as has been proved by Boechari.[42]

The rule of Airlangga and his immediate successors was followed by a long interruption in the epigraphical evidence till the year 1117, when we come across the first inscription of a ruler of Kaḍiri. For more than a hundred years, till 1222 A.D., an uninterrupted sequence of kings is known to have ruled from Kaḍiri over the middle portion of the Brantas valley.[43] During this century East Javanese history became the history of the Early Kingdom of Kaḍiri. No other important kings are known to have ruled during this period in the upcountry around Singhasāri and in the lower delta region. But we have also no evidence that Kaḍiri tried or even succeeded in conquering these areas outside its own nuclear area.

It was only during the Singhasāri period that the foundation stone of an Imperial Kingdom was laid in Eastern Java. Founded by Ken Angrok in the year 1222, the kingdom of Singhasāri seems to have been firmly established as the foremost power of Java only under the kings Viṣṇuvardhana and Kertanagara who ruled between 1248 and 1292 A.D. Although Singhasāri defeated Kaḍiri and certainly established its power at the cost of Kaḍiri, it was obviously not able to annex Kaḍiri completely and extinguish its rulers.[44] From the *Nāgarakērtāgama* we know that throughout the whole Singhasāri period three Kaḍiri kings ruled as tributary kings (*sāmanta-rāja*).[45] Despite the extension of its ("ritual"?) authority over Bali and parts of Sumatra, Singhasāri thus seems to have remained an extended Early Kingdom. The precarious position of Singhasāri was dramatically highlighted when Jayakatwang, the *sāmanta-rāja* of Kaḍiri,[46] looted the capital Singhasāri and killed its king in the year 1292 A.D.

It was only under King Wijaya, a relative of King Kertanagara, that the newly-established kingdom of Majapahit was able to annex Kaḍiri completely. For the first time since King Sindok in the 10th century, the three nuclear areas of Eastern Java, Singhasāri, Kaḍiri and the delta area with Majapahit, became united under one dynasty. It extinguished all local *rājās* in this region, which became the new and considerable enlarged core area of the empire of Majapahit. The

annexation of the neighbouring areas, however, was in no way smooth sailing. During its first decades Majapahit faced a number of serious revolts in exactly those areas which had been annexed. These revolts are a clear indicator of a drastic change in policy of the central dynasty towards the outer areas which formerly were ruled by highly-respected tributary chiefs or **rājās**.

The **Nāgarakērtagama**, composed only a few decades later in the year 1356 A.D. illustrates the success of this new policy of annexation most convincingly. Already its first chapter contains a complete and "annotated" list of the **nagaras** ("towns" or capitals of formerly independent chiefs and **rājās**) which meanwhile had been completely annexed by Majapahit. They all seem to have been ruled by princes and princesses of the Majapahit dynasty. This description concludes as follows:

All Illustrious Javanese Kings (**rāja**) and Queens, the honoured ones who equally are distinguished by their towns, each having one for his or her own, in one place, in Wilwa Tikta (Majapahit), they hold in their lap the honoured Prince-Overlord (**narendrāḍīpa**)."[47]

In my opinion, this description is a clear indicator of a successful policy of annexation of an imperial kingdom.[48] This annexation was followed by a thorough "dynastification" of the areas of formerly autonomous and even independent chiefs and **rājās** which had once surrounded the nuclear area of an Early Kingdom.

In India and, to some extent, also in Southeast Asia this development is reflected by the semantic change of the word **sāmanta**. The etymological meaning of **sāmanta** is "on all sides" or "bordering". In earlier texts it means particularly "neighbour". In the early political terminology, e.g. in Asoka's inscriptions of the 3rd century B.C., it is equivalent to "(independent) neighbouring ruler". Around 500 A.D., when the early mediaeval kingdoms expanded into their areas, its meaning changed to "(defeated) neighbouring ruler" and it became synonymous with "tributary chief" or "tributary **rājā**" (**sāmanta-rāja**).[49] It was a typical attribute of the Early Kingdoms of mediaeval India to be surrounded by a "circle of tributary chiefs" (**sāmanta-cakra**).[50] Because of their importance at the royal courts, **sāmanta** soon also became a title of high officers and dignitaries at the central dynasty. This semantic change from an independent neighbour to a tributary chief and finally to a high dignitary at the central court thus is an excellent illustration of the structural changes which took place during the above-mentioned process of state formation.

In Java, too, we know several examples of a slow transformation of former independent local **rakai** chiefs to tributary princes of the Early Kingdoms, and finally to high dignitaries at the courts of the Imperial Kingdoms.[51]

The earliest inscription of East Java was issued in the year 760 A.D. by an independent prince, Gajayāna of Kañjuruhan near Singhasāri which was identified by J.G. de Casparis as the Kanuruhan of later inscriptions. A **rakai** of Kanuruhan was still acting independently in his territory in the year 881 A.D. but in the year 915 King Dakṣa issued an inscription "in favour" (**anugraha**) of the **rakai** of Kanuruhan. In the meantime, Kanuruhan had obviously been incorporated into the kingdom of Dakṣa. In later centuries the **rakai** of Kanuruhan became the highest

functionary of the central government as "chancellor".[52] A similar development might have taken place in the case of other high dignitaries of the Javanese kingdom, e.g. the three **rakais** Hino, Halu and Sirikan.[53] Although their incorporation into the central government took place in the transition period of the Early to the Imperial Kingdoms, the change of their function within the political system is symptomatic of a development which culminated in the period of Imperial Kingdoms. The process began with their subordination as tributary rulers and it was followed by their integration and incorporation into the central government. This in turn finally led to their "de-territorialization", their displacement from their former territories, which were then taken over by members of the central dynasties or officers of the court. This process increased slowly the number and importance of the "patrimonial staff" of the central dynasties at the cost of the autonomous local leadership.

## VI

Undoubtedly, the State of Angkor was most advanced in the double process of transforming former autonomous local or regional centres into provinces (**viṣaya**) and in building up a centralized bureaucracy. As is well known, Chou Ta-kuan mentioned at the end of the 13th century that Cambodia was divided into about 90 provinces, each province having a fortified citadel, governed by a mandarin. But Wolters pointed out that the number of the twenty-three images of Jayabuddhamahānātha, which Jayavarman VII had distributed throughout his empire, is more likely to reflect "the number of substantial territorial units in the kingdom at that time, which included some in the Menam basin".[54] An article by S. Sahai contains a list of eighteen **pramāns** or **viṣayas** out of which ten "could be traced back to the pre-Angkorian period when they functioned as more or less independent principalities rather than actual units of provincial administration".[55] Out of those which are mentioned only in Angkorian times as new provinces, Lavo or Lopburi in Central Thailand forms an interesting example of a very quick transformation of a conquered, formerly independent principality into a province of an imperial kingdom. Till the early years of the 11th century Lavo was an independent kingdom. It was conquered by Sūryavarman I when he was still struggling for the uncontested rule of Angkor. But already in the year 1011 a **tamrvac** from the **pramān** Lavo was mentioned among this cadre of high officers who took the famous oath of allegiance to Sūryavarman. His village (**sruk**) was also situated in the **pramān** of Lavo. The question whether we may infer from this fact that this **tamrvac** originally belonged to the local elite of Lavo or whether he was posted there from outside, is difficult to decide.[56]

"Provincialization" of neighbouring principalities and early kingdoms through the expansionism of imperial kingdoms, however, usually did not erase the socio-political identity of these annexed areas. During the early years of the Mahādhara-pura dynasty when Sūryavarman II perhaps had not yet been able to establish his authority in the outlying districts, Lavo sent on its own a mission to China in the year 1115 and again in 1155, after the death of the great Sūryavarman. Lavo might even have become completely independent during the following decade. But Lavo was again certainly a province when a son of Jayavarman VII

became the Lord (*Īśa*) of Lavo and when Jayavarman sent one of the Jayabuddhamahānātha images to Lavo.[57]

Malyang is another example which shows that even a former principality which was near to the imperial capital does not lose its identity, even after several centuries of "provincialization". In the year 893 it was mentioned as a *pramān* and again in 1145 as a *viśaya* of the Angkorian State. But during the chaotic years which followed the devastation of Angkor by the Chams in the year 1177, Malyang revolted against Jayavarman VII. Thus even strong imperial kingdoms like Angkor had to face revolts and wars within their own provinces. But contrary to the period of the early kingdoms they were the exception and not the rule. Therefore we should be careful not to overstress the aspect of "multiplicity of centres" in the case of these Imperial Kingdoms. Otherwise the structure of the German medieval empire, for instance even under Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, has also to be reconsidered and certainly the contemporary French and English kingdoms, too.

The case of Angkor reveals yet another aspect of change which had begun already in the period of the Early Kingdoms and which led to a substantial change in the internal development of the Imperial Kingdoms. Anthropologists agree that fission, the breaking away of one part of a social group or polity, was a major feature of chieftaincies. This fissiparous tendency still existed in the Early Kingdoms. When a tributary chief became strong enough he declared his independence and established within his own nuclear area a new polity. In course of time, it might have become the core of a new Early Kingdom. Its new *rājā* certainly tried to defeat his meanwhile weakened overlord who in turn thus fell back to the position of a tributary chief of his erstwhile "vassal". During the period of the Early Kingdoms dynastic change usually also meant a displacement of the nuclear area of the former Early Kingdom by the nuclear area of the new dynasty, which became the core of the new kingdom. This political pattern of the Early Kingdoms, which was still characterized by a tendency of fission and fusion, by the rise and fall of local and regional dynastic centres with their overlapping circles or spheres of influence and their changing loyalties, is appropriately described by the *maṇḍala* concept. But from a certain stage of development onwards, the fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies were outbalanced by, and finally given up in favour of, centripetal efforts. Jayavarman II's foundation of the Angkorian kingdom was as much based on this changing attitude as his success contributed to the change. "Local independence was no longer the acceptable objection as it had been in the eighth century. The integrity of the Angkorian kingdom was no longer in question".[58]

In this new situation the aim of ambitious governors in outlying provinces or autonomous tributary chiefs was no longer separatism but rather to gain a stronger and higher position at the centre, or to launch, in case of its weakness, a *coup d' état*. Sūryavarman I's aim was not to defeat or to destroy the Angkorian kingdom in order to build up a new great kingdom. On the contrary, he fought for years to conquer the already firmly-established centre and to become its uncontested ruler. And it was Sūryavarman who became the true founder of Imperial Angkor.[59] Again, a century later, the Mahidharapura dynasty, which had its origin most probably in the north of Angkor, did not fight for its own independence. But it began a struggle for the conquest of Angkor which lasted for several decades. It was finally won by

Sūryavarma II who then became one of Angkor's greatest imperial rulers. Had he acted during the second stage of the Early Kingdoms, he might have constructed Angkor Wat in his own nuclear area in order to demonstrate his own greatness vis-à-vis the defeated dynasty of the centre.[60] It needs no further explanation that this new centripetal force contributed a lot to the relatively high stability of the extended core areas of the Imperial Kingdoms.

Such problems as, for instance, the extension of the patrimonial staff, the provincialization of formerly autonomous tributary states, or the centripetal ambitions of the leaders of outlying provinces, show that anthropological models lose much of their relevance for a structural analysis of the Imperial Kingdoms. And, as already mentioned, even the *maṇḍala* concept as described by O.W. Wolters does not give sufficient scope to the structural changes which constitute the difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms.

## VII

Another major problem of the transition from the Early Kingdoms to the Imperial Kingdoms is whether or not the latter were able to establish a firm hold over the local administration of the enlarged core area and to increase their legitimate access to the local resources. It is known that the "conventional school" of historians answers this question in the affirmative. These historians argue on the basis of the existing lists of a hierarchy of officers which allegedly linked the court directly and indirectly with the provinces, districts and even villages. But on the basis of his intensive studies, B. Stein came to a very different interpretation, even in the case of the administration of the Cōḷa empire which usually is accepted to have been one of the most centrally-administered States of its age throughout India and Southeast Asia. "In this political order resources did not flow from the subordinate to the central domain by command of the latter. In fact, there are no reliable data on resource transfers of a political nature - cash or kind - at all".[61]

A systematic analysis of the rather meager epigraphical evidence most probably will show that this inference holds good for most or even all Early States in the whole region. It seems as if the court and its officers in all these States lived mainly from their own landed property and from benefices with a usufruct which might have been limited in time or heredity. This decentralized system of extracting socially-produced surpluses existed already in the nuclear areas of the Early Kingdoms. But the major difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms in this regard was the fact that the imperial court was able to extend this system into the annexed provinces of the enlarged core area.[62] According to the growth of this core area and the centre's power of disposal, the number of courtiers and officers grew without changing the decentralized system as such. But the mere increase in the number of courtiers who obtained a living from "their" villages in the countryside increased - directly or indirectly - the impact of the centre on its hinterland. There might indeed have been only little "resource transfers of a political nature" from the more distant places of the core area to the centre. New, however, was the dense network of mutual dependency which linked the centre and its enlarged core area in a hitherto unknown degree. Whereas the court of the Early Kingdom

depended mainly on the resources of its direct hinterland, the whole enlarged core area of the Imperial Kingdom was linked with the centre by a system of decentralized collection of duties and their redistribution. In his paper on "Kingship, the Saṅgha and Society in Pagan"[63] Michael Aung Thwin has very convincingly shown how the three irrigated *kharuin* rice belts of the core area of Pagan, with their decentralized local administration, were linked with the court at Pagan through an elaborate system of redistributive economy.

### VIII

Finally, another distinct feature of the Imperial Kingdoms should be mentioned: the new "ritual policy" and ideology of the imperial rulers. Religions, whether autochthonous cults, Hinduism or Buddhism, have always been an integral part of kingship and statecraft in India and Southeast Asia. The importance of the personal belief of the rulers and their priests and their magical capability is known to us already from the earliest inscriptional and literary evidence. And on special occasions there were always grand ceremonies, for example, seasonal festivities, potlatch-like "Verdienstfeste" or Vedic rituals. But in the context of statecraft, religion otherwise remained a private affair of the ruler and his court rather than a public or political affair. This role of religion and rituals however changed considerably in Southeast Asia during the last centuries of the first millennium A.D. and it changed even more drastically throughout the following centuries during the time of the Imperial Kingdoms when religion, or better, religious policy, became a major and permanent aspect of kingship.

This change is perhaps most obvious with regard to the topography of the temples. Since their first appearance in Southeast Asia there have always been temples at the political centres or capitals of the Early Kingdoms. But it seems that initially temples of major importance, both from the religious and political point of view, were more often constructed at particular holy places, for example, on the top of a mountain or on its slope (e.g. Vat Ph'u and Mahendraparvata in Cambodia or Canggal, Dieng, Borobudur and Gunung Penanggungan in Java). But from a certain period onwards temples were constructed to an increasing extent near or at the political centres. Accordingly they became more and more the focal point of a magico-political "force field" emanating from the political centre of the kingdom. Krom had earlier suggested that the temple complex of the Lara Djonggrang at Prambanam depicted a replica of the whole state, the central sanctuary representing the royal court, and the different temple buildings around the sanctuary the various parts of the kingdom.[64] Later, in his detailed study of the inscriptions of Tjandi Plaosan-Lor, J.G. de Casparis was able to go even one step further. He proved that the donative inscriptions on the surrounding 174 small shrines belonged to the royal family and "higher dignitaries from all over the kingdom, so that the temple complex as a whole would more or less reflect the relations within the kingdom. [And] there may be some indications that the place in the complex occupied by their buildings corresponds to the situation of territories with which they are associated".[65] Thus, already in the transitional period between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms the central temples had become a magical instrument[66] of obviously the greatest importance under the direct control of the king



and his priests. This function of the temple, which never existed in this explicit form in India, found its clearest expression in the royal temple pyramids of Angkor and culminated in the Bayon of Jayavarman VII. How else can one interpret the fact that the Jayavarman sent twenty-three sculptures of Jayabuddha, showing the king himself in an idealized form as the "Great Protector" (*mahānātha*) Buddha, while at the same time these provinces had to send substitutes of their own provincial deities to the capital where they were enshrined in the Bayon. This was embellished with fifty-four towers, each of which showed four faces of the deified king.

To the same extent that these new royal temples became the magico-political centre of the empire and the cosmos, the imperial kings themselves became directly associated with the divine power of these centres. Hindu kingship has always been regarded as a divine institution and Hindu kings were compared with gods. But it was only during the relatively late time which coincided with the period of the Imperial Kingdoms that even living kings "as rulers of the earth" became the representatives and part (*aṃśa*) of the divine cosmic ruler or Devarāja. On the top of the temple pyramids of Angkor the divine Devarāja and the "subtle innerself" (*sūkṣmāntarātman*) of his earthly representative met and merged in the divine *liṅgam* which bore a name combining god and king.[67] In a few cases, imperial kings might even have tried to become deified during their actual lifetime. A well-known, though still dubious, example is King Kertanagara's inscription of the year 1289 A.D. on an image of the Buddhist deity Mahākṣobhya. In this inscription he seems to have claimed that he was consecrated "in the form of Mahākṣobhya".[68]

This apotheosis of the imperial kings certainly may also be explained in religious terms. The tremendous increase in their power and the new symbols of divine kingship which surrounded them must have raised their status accordingly in the eyes of the people. But this religious change of the role of kingship implies or reflects a political change, too. An imperial king was no longer only a founder of a glorious dynasty and a destroyer of the surrounding *sāmanta-cakra*, as for instance Sañjaya of Central Java is praised in his inscription of the year 732. The imperial king unified the hitherto fragmented and chaotic world under one umbrella (*eka chattra*) and became a universal *cakravartin*. This imperial ideology of a cosmic responsibility for the whole realm finds very clear expression in the famous Sdok Kak Thom inscription of the year 1052, referring to the foundation of imperial Kambuja in the year 802. Jayavarman II invited the Brahmin Hiranyadāma who was well-versed in magical science (*siddhi vidyā*) "to conduct a ceremony which should prevent this land Kambuja from ever being dependent on Javā, and to bring about [instead] that there should be only one single 'Lord of the lower earth' [= king; Khmer: *kamraten phdai karom*], who would be Cakravartin. This brahman [...] consecrated the 'Lord of the World', who is King [*kamraten jagat ta rāja* = Skt.: *Devarāja*]."[69]

In Java, Kertanagara's rule marks the beginning of the imperial phase of the Javanese kingdom. The Sarwadharmā inscription of the year 1269 describes Kertanagara as the "Illustrious Great King, being considered as the one sunshade (*eka chātra*) over all Java-land, causing the unification of the lands of Janggala and Pangjalu to return".[70] And it was "because of his unification of the domain" (*kṣityekībhāva-*

**karaṇāt**)[71] that twenty years later he claimed the divine status of a **Mahākṣobhya**.

## IX

It is not only this new imperial ideology which matters in the context of this paper however. Of even greater relevance are its structural consequences. On the basis of this new ideology and, at the same time, in order to strengthen the imperial unity and their own position, the imperial kings covered their extended core areas with a close network of religious institutions which focussed directly on the capital and its religious institutions and thus, at least indirectly, on the imperial king himself. This system, linking local, provincial and a few major temples at the capital with the imperial temple of the ruling king, was perhaps most highly developed in Angkor under Jayavarman VII.[72] The economic ties which linked these temples might even partly have substituted for the "resource transfer of a political nature". And, furthermore, in the case of Angkor we have reliable and detailed data on the extent to which the large temples, which remained under direct control of the central court, influenced directly the economic development of the core area of Angkor. The core area and the provinces were linked through imperial roads. Along these roads the imperial kings constructed resthouses for pilgrims, traders, and officers, and at nodal points of this infrastructure temples functioned as royal resthouses and temporary imperial palaces. At the end of the 12th century the extended core area of Angkor might have been covered by about 3000-3500 temples, all fulfilling important ritual, economic and administrative functions.

Under the imperial kings of Majapahit the extended core area of East Java was also covered with a network of temples. These temples were certainly not as monumental as the temples of the earlier kings of Central Java or Angkor. But the intrinsic feature of the "ritual network" in East Java was perhaps even more explicit. Inscriptions and the **Nāgarakērtagāma** leave no doubt that these temples were directly linked with the imperial policy of unification of the extended core area. In the already-mentioned Sarwadharma inscription, King Kertanagara reconfirmed the special privileges granted to the religious domains (**dharma**) by his father Viṣṇuvardhana. These concessions were granted in order to separate "the dominions and dependencies of the honoured holy domains of the clergy of all kinds from the lands of the Royal servants, with the intention of the independence (**swatantra**) of the honoured holy domains of the clergy of all kinds, in order to render the more firm the Illustrious Great King's sitting on the jewel lion's throne, being considered as the one sunshade (**eka chātra**) of all Java-land, as the exalted deity (**uttunga dewa**) among all the honoured Prabhus (**samantaprabhu**) of the land of Janggala and Pangjalu".[73] Here we have in a nutshell the essence of the imperial ritual policy, i.e. to unite the extended core area and to strengthen the position of the ruler. This conclusion is reconfirmed by the **Nāgarakērtāgama** composed about a century later. In connection with the **Śraddha** ceremonies performed for the queen Rājapatnī at her funeral temple at Bayalangu, it is stated: "The reason for it to be fashioned as an eminent religious domain (**dharma**) was: in order that again the land of Java might become one, that orderly it might have one king (**rāja**), that as one country it

would be known in the world in future, not going to deviate. It was to be a token of the illustrious Prince's being a vanquisher of all countries on the earth, being a universe-swaying Prabhu (*cakrawartti prabhū*).[74] And the chapter of the *Nāgarakērtāgama* concludes: The deceased Queen "is being offered worship (*puja*) by well-born people (*amatya*), the villages (*grāma*), all of them are submissive (*bhakti*). She enjoys her heaven, having a grandson paramount in Yāwaland, a [sole] monarch (*eka nātha*)."[75] The ideological function of this grand ceremony in which the whole court of Majapahit participated is very evident: to keep the land united and the villages submissive and to ensure that Java is ruled only by one universal ruler.

But again, it is not only this imperial ideology which matters here. It is the network of royal temples covering the extended imperial core area of Majapahit which is relevant for our present deliberations. The *Nāgarakērtāgama* mentions that in the year 1365 A.D. there existed twenty-seven royal religious domains (*dharma haji*).[76] All these temples and their dependencies were under the guardianship of abbots (*sthāpaka*) and under the control of royal priests (*wiku-rājas*). And it is of the greatest interest that, at least according to my knowledge, all these royal domains and their temples were established during the "imperial" century of Javanese history from the middle of the 13th century to the year 1365 A.D. when the *Nāgarakērtāgama* was written by Prapañca. None of the earlier temples (e.g. Sanggariti or Badut) seem to have been included in the system of these royal domains.[77] These royal domains, therefore, obviously formed an integral part of the policy of the imperial kings of this period.

## X

The system of royal domains in Java and of the hierarchical order of temples in Angkor and monastic institutions in Burma thus provided the imperial kings and their courts with an additional infrastructure which did not exist in the Early Kingdoms. Further research is certainly required to come to some final conclusions in these matters. But even now we may come to the hypothetical inference that this new infrastructure had an impact on the structure of the Imperial Kingdoms of Southeast Asia, too. It allowed the imperial courts, perhaps for the first time, a permanent and in some cases even direct access to the sphere of local matters even outside the limited nuclear area which was under their direct political control. Together with other spheres and mechanisms of integration, some of which have not been mentioned at all in this paper (e.g. art and architecture, literature or trade),[78] this ritual policy played an important role in a continuous process of interlocal or intraregional integration. This process of integration and structural change which radiated from the courts to the extended core areas was perhaps the most important change which took place during the short period of Imperial Kingdoms in Southeast Asia. In most cases the political framework of these core areas of integration was shattered in the following centuries. But the socio-cultural heritage of these extended core areas of the former Imperial Kingdoms again played a most important role in a more recent political process which scholars of political science refer to as a "nation-building process".

## NOTES

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38. B. Stein, op.cit. (note 19), p.16.
39. See also in this connection K.R. Hall, "An Introductory Essay on Southeast Asian Statecraft in the Classical Period", in **Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History: The Origins of Southeast Asian Statecraft**, ed. by K.R. Hall and J.K. Whitmore, University of Michigan 1976, pp.1-24; Denys Lombard, "Le concept d'empire en Asie du Sud-Est", in **Le Concept d'Empire**, ed. by M. Duverger, Paris 1980, pp.433-41.
40. O.W. Wolters, "Jayavarman II's Military Power: The Territorial Foundation of the Angkorian Empire", in **JRAS**, 1973, pp. 21-30; C. Jacques, "Etudes d'épigraphie cambodgienne. VIII. La carrière de Jayavarman II", in **BEFEO**, 59 (1972) pp.205-20.
41. For the text of the inscription see B.R. Chatterji, **History of Indonesia, Early and Medieval**, Meerut 1967, pp.171-84.
42. Boechari, "Sri Maharaja Mapanji Garasakan, a new evidence on the problem of Airlangga's partition of his kingdom", in **Madjalah ilmu-ilmu sastra Indonesia**, 4 (1968) pp.1-25.
43. N.J. Krom, "De vorsten van Kediri, 1038-1144 (saka)", in **TBG**, 56 (1914) pp.242-52.
44. E.g., G. Coedès, however, is of the opinion that Kadiri "became an integral part of the kingdom of Tumapel" (Singhasari) already under Aṅrok, op.cit. (note 10), p.187. On Aṅrok see: Boechari, "Ken Aṅrok - Bastard Son of Tungul Ametun?", in **Majalah ilmu-ilmu sastra Indonesia**, 6,1 (1975) pp.15-33 and "The Inscription of Mūla Maluru . A New Evidence on the Historicity of Ken Aṅrok", in **Majalah Arkeologi**, Th. III, No.1-2 (1980) pp.55-70.
45. **Nagarakertagama (NK)**, 44,1 (translations quoted from T.G.T. Pigeaud, **Java in the 14th Century**, The Hague 1960, Vol. 3).
46. Jayakatwang's origin and his relation with the Singhasārī dynasty are still unclear. According to the newly-discovered copper-plates of Mūla-Malurun, Jayakatwang was a nephew of Kertanagara. But "according to

46. (continued)  
the Kidu Harṣa Wijaya Jayakatyē is a great-grandson of Kṛtājaya, the last king of Kadiri who was defeated by Ken Aṅrok or Śrī Rājasa. That is why his chief minister (patih) instigated him to attack Kṛtanagara of Siṅhasāri, great-grandson of Ken Aṅrok, to revenge his great-grandfather's murder (H.W., II, 17-19;35)<sup>n</sup>, Boechari, op.cit. (1980), p.62.
47. NK, 6,4.
48. For a different interpretation see O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 7), p.16.
49. See L.L. Gopal, "Sāmanta - Its Varying Significance in Ancient India", in *JRAS*, 1963, pp.21-37.
50. In his Canggal inscription of the year 732 A.D. Sañjaya also claims to have "overthrown many circles of sāmantas", sl.11 (H.B. Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, Calcutta 1971, Vol. I, p.18).
51. Boechari, *Some Considerations of the Problem of the Shift of Mataram's Center of Government from Central to East Java in the 10th Century A.D.* (Bulletin of Research Centre of Archaeology of Indonesia, No. 10) 1976.
52. F.H. van Naerssen, op.cit. (note 14), p.53 ff.
53. Boechari, "Rakryān Mahāmantri i Hino. A Study on the Highest Court Dignitary of Ancient Java up to the 13th Century A.D.", in *Beberapa karya dalam ilmu-ilmu sastra* (Fakultas sastra Universitas Indonesia 1975-1976), pp. 61-111.
54. O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 12), p.369, note 102.
55. S. Sahai, "Territorial Administration in Ancient Cambodia", in *The South East Asian Review*, 2 (1977) pp.35-50, (38).
56. IC, III, p.210, La formule du serment, A16.
57. IC, II, p.176, Grande Stèle du Phimanakas, St. LVII.
58. O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 40), p.30.
59. M. Vickery rejects G. Coedès story of Sūryavarman I's alleged origin from the Malayan Peninsula and instead traces back his origin to an old aristocratic family of Angkor. (M. Vickery, "The Reign of Sūryavarman I and the Dynamics of Angkorean Development", unpublished paper, Eighth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Kuala Lumpur 1980.) His paper is important in another context, too, as he noticed a "rapid bureaucratic expansion" in Angkor in the 10th century which thus preceded Angkor's final "imperial breakthrough" in the 11th century.
60. At exactly the same time a very similar event took place in eastern India when Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga of southern Kāliṅga conquered Central Orissa in c.1112 A.D. He shifted his own capital to Central Orissa and constructed there, too, the greatest temple of his enlarged empire, i.e. the Jagannātha temple at Puri. See H. Kulke, op.cit. (fn. 25 and fn.67, p.40).
61. B. Stein, op.cit. (note 19), p.45.
62. J.G. de Casparis, "Pour une histoire sociale de l'ancienne Java principalement au X<sup>ème</sup> s.", in *Archipel*, 21 (1981) pp.125-51; J.

62. (continued)  
Wisseman Christie, "Rāja and Rāma: The Classical State in Early Java", in **Centers, Symbols, and Hierarchies: Essays on the Classical States of Southeast Asia**, ed. by L. Gesick (Monograph Series No. 26, Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies), New Haven 1983, pp.9-44.
63. M. Aung Thwin, "Kingship, the Saṅgha, and Society in Pagan", in K.R. Hall and J.K. Whitmore (eds), *op.cit.* (note 39), pp.205-56.
64. N.J. Krom, **Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst**, 2nd ed., 1923, Vol. II, p.453.
65. J.G. de Casparis, **Short Inscriptions from Tjaṅḍi Plaosan-Lor**, Djakarta 1958, p.31 (**Bulletin of the Archaeological Service of the Republic of Indonesia**, No. 4).
66. J. Fillozat, "Le symbolisme du monument du Phnom Bakheñ", in **BEFEO**, 54 (1954) pp. 527-54.
67. H. Kulke, **The Devarāja Cult**, Ithaca 1978 (Data Paper, No. 108, Cornell Southeast Asia Program).
68. The Mahākṣobhya image inscription of the year 1289; see B.R. Chatterji, *op.cit.*, p.186.
69. Sdok Kak Thom inscription, C, 71-4; see H. Kulke, *op.cit.* (note 67), p.15.
70. Sarwadharmā inscription, plate 6, recto, lines 4ff; see G.T. Pigeaud, *op.cit.* (note 45), p.149.
71. The Mahākṣobhya image inscription, see note 68.
72. I.W. Mabbett, "Kingship in Angkor", in **Journal of the Siam Society**, 66,2 (1978) pp.1-58; Leonid A. Sedow, "Angkor: Society and State", in **The Early State**, ed. by H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik, The Hague 1978, pp.111-30; M.C. Ricklefs, "Land and the Law in Epigraphy of Tenth-Century Cambodia", in **Journal of Asian Studies**, 26 (1967) pp.411-20.
73. Sarwadharmā inscription, plate 3, lines 4 ff, see Pigeaud, *op.cit.* (note 45), p.145.
74. **NK**, 68,5.
75. **NK**, 69,3.
76. **NK**, 74,2.
77. Not all of the 27 dharmas, however, have yet been identified.
78. J. Wisseman, "Markets and Trade in Pre-Majapahit Java", in **Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia**, ed. by K.L. Hutterer, Michigan 1977, pp.197-212; K.R. Hall, "Khmer Commercial Development and Foreign Contacts under Sūryavarman I", in **Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient**, 18,3 (1975); A. Thomas Kirsch, "Kinship, Genealogical Claims, and Societal Integration in Ancient Khmer Society: An Interpretation", in C.D. Cowan and O.W. Wolters, *op.cit.* (note 13), pp.190-202; I.W. Mabbett, "Varṇas in Angkor and the Indian Caste System", in **Journal of Asian Studies**, 36 (1977).



## 2

# Hydraulic Works and Southeast Asian Polities

Janice Stargardt

### Introduction

Whatever the merits of "The great river valley" theory for delineating the ancient pattern of settlement in the Near East, North India and North China, it seems to have little relevance in ancient South East Asia. Although the mainland of South East Asia was in large part created by three of the world's great rivers: the Irrawaddy, the Chao Phraya and the Mekong, none of the earliest cities and states was located in their vicinity. This extraordinary fact has been noted with surprise in regard to the Mekong, in a recent study of ancient Khmer civilization.[1] In fact, it is equally true of the ancient pattern of settlement of the Pyūs in Central Burma, the Mōns in Central and Southern Thailand and the ancient inhabitants (probably Mōn) of the Trans-Bassac Plain in Southern Vietnam. The fact that early civilizations developed on the fringes of the great alluvial tracts of the Irrawaddy, Mekong and Chao Phraya rather than in their richest soils, is at first sight the more enigmatic in view of the needs of agriculture and the range of opportunities that were apparently neglected through this pattern of settlement.

Pyū sites are typically located in side valleys of the Irrawaddy, on the more limited alluvia created by perennial but highly seasonal rivers such as the Yin and Nawin. The ancient Khmers occupied a similar habitat along a series of rivers draining into Tonlé Sap or into the Mekong River from the North and the West. The Mōn sites of Central Thailand and the head of the Malay Peninsula are on the periphery of the Chao Phraya alluvium or close to much smaller rivers such as the Mae Khlung and the Khwae Noi. The ancient sites of the Trans-Bassac Plain are in fact - despite the title of the site survey - well away from the delta of the Mekong,[2] along the fringes of its alluvia or on those laid down by smaller rivers. Similar ecological conditions surround the sites belonging to the Satingpra complex in South Thailand. Excavated sites with this significant pattern of distribution can be traced from the 2nd century BC down to the 14th century AD and range from small sites like Pong Tuk to vast ones like Śrī Kṣetra and Angkor. Their total chronology is much longer than the period selected for study in the Canberra symposium, but the continuity of the settlement pattern, as well as its prevalence over such a wide area of the mainland, give it a

basic role in discussions of the emergence of enduring, larger polities in South East Asia. This paper attempts to broach the problems posed by this settlement pattern by looking in some detail at the data provided by the Satingpra complex and more briefly at the wider context revealed by the Pyū, Khmer and Mōn sites elsewhere.

### Hydraulic Works and the Satingpra Settlement Pattern

The sites of the Satingpra complex discovered since 1970 are presented in Figure 1. The sites themselves, their environment and the stages of development of ancient civilization, agriculture and hydraulic works have been uncovered and studied over the past fifteen years by a joint team from Cambridge, the Fine Arts Department and the Prince of Songkhla University.[3] Although much of the Malay Peninsula at latitudes between 0° and 10° N receives a heavy rainfall distributed in two rainy seasons per annum, the Satingpra complex had its core territory in a relatively dry area. It has only one rainy season, which is poor if not inadequate for producing rain-fed rice, and the Satingpra Peninsula has produced little natural drainage or water storage. Yet in this area, a remarkable continuity in the pattern of settlement has been traced from the 2nd century AD down to the 14th century AD. Ancient villages, monasteries, workshops and towns were strung out along ancient beach ridges running parallel to the modern coastline. Similar beach ridges provide important keys to the pattern of ancient settlement in the area of Nakorn Sri Thammarat, Si Chon, Chaiya, Kubua, Petchburi, and across the Gulf of Siam, in the area of Oc èo. One of the remarkable environmental features of settlement on the Satingpra Peninsula, however, is that from the earliest evidence so far recovered, permanent agricultural settlements were established well away from the natural sources of surface fresh water (the lakes of the isthmus). This unusual development was made possible only by the exploitation of sub-surface fresh water by a variety of means - man-made ponds or tanks, canals and wells: that is, by hydraulic works.

The Satingpra hydraulic works, which were to become a very large and productive system with a high measure of integration, were in origin a discontinuous set of village works of very limited extent (Figure 2). For every ancient settlement which succeeded in providing itself with water for irrigation as well as domestic needs, there were several others that achieved only a lower degree of environmental control and practised bare subsistence forms of unirrigated agriculture. Nevertheless, the technology acquired by some villages through the practice of small-scale hydraulic works was in time to become a valuable instrument in transforming the natural aquatic levels of the Satingpra Peninsula and converting low agricultural yields into substantial and reliable surpluses. The extraction of agricultural surpluses was the basis on which urbanization and the beginnings of a larger polity took place on the Satingpra Peninsula between the 5th and 6th century AD, but intermittent participation in long-distance maritime trade had been going on since the 2nd century AD and was to rise in frequency and volume after the 6th century AD, in association with the development of transport canals.

## Urbanization and the Hydraulic Network

The larger hydraulic works of the Satingpra Peninsula comprised large canals constructed to navigable proportions. They were consistently constructed to one of several standard sizes - for instance, 10m wide by 3.40m deep, 10m wide by 3.65m deep, and 6m wide by 3.40m deep (Satingpra I, Tables 26, 27a and 27b). The standardization and the high degree of integration between the canals of the navigable kind during Phase I of Satingpra's urbanized history (Figure 3) reveal the presence of an effective co-ordinating mechanism in this polity. The extent of the large-scale, integrated canal system indicates the core territory of the Satingpra state. There were, however, unirrigated territories closely associated with it but still practising less productive forms of agriculture and less directly accessible because of the absence of transport canals. Moreover, the small-scale village irrigation works continued to exist side-by-side with the great canals. The centre of the hydraulic system was Satingpra - the type-site - situated amidst the most intensive hydraulic development of the whole area. The site contains the greatest number of monumental tumuli and the richest deposits of archaeological debris. The Satingpra urban area was defined by its hydraulic works (Figure 4), which were laid out in an approximately symmetrical way: the great lateral canal linking the Gulf of Siam to Thalé Sap (the central artery in the navigable system), bisected the urban area from East to West. It was 12m wide and 4.40m deep over most of its course. A moat surrounded the small citadel area where the central monuments, an ancient tank, dense habitation and trade debris lay. In the outer urban sectors, squarish water tanks ranging in size from 250m to 50m a side, defined the corners of the site.

In the demarcation of urban spaces by hydraulic works and the pairing of monuments with tanks, one recognizes again at Satingpra features whose significance has already been studied in Angkor's successive stages.[4] Recent research has also revealed the presence of a dense network of ancient canals and water tanks in and around each of the three vast cities of the ancient Pyū: at Beikthano, Halin and Śrī Kṣetra (or Thayekettara).[5] Differences exist between the hydraulic technology employed by the Mōns at Satingpra, the Khmers at Angkor and Sambor Prei Kuk and the Pyūs at the sites just named, which will be explored further in the following pages together with their important similarities, but the definition of urban spaces through canals, moats and tanks is an important feature common to them all.

The Satingpra hydraulic system reached its zenith during its second phase of urban civilization, from the mid-9th to the late 13th century (Figure 5). Phase I came to an end with a serious attack on the capital city in approximately 835 AD during which one of its western gates was burnt. Phase II witnessed the repair and refoundation of the capital with the ritual burial of a cremated young elephant near the western gate. This took place in approximately 885 AD (Carbon 14 and thermoluminescence dates for Satingpra in Satingpra I, Tables 2a and 2b). During Phase II, the Satingpra complex passed under Indonesian cultural and possibly political dominance. Its navigable canals were greatly extended, especially to the West, making two almost continuous waterways across the isthmus, and to the North forming a transport route to Nakorn Śrī Thammarat and the ancient coastline at Pak Phanang

(Figure 1). In the 11th century high quality ceramic wares, especially Kendis made at Kok Moh, the kiln site in the Satingpra complex, began to be exported along the northern canal to Nakorn Sri Thammarat, and in considerable quantities along the trans-isthmian waterways to be traded at Kota Cina in North Sumatra and Muara Jambi in South Sumatra as well as to the southern Philippines and Kedah. The kiln site where these wares were made was linked by navigable canal to the capital, Satingpra, and through it to the North, to the sea and the lakes. Maritime trade with China, which had been going on during Satingpra Phase I, rose enormously in volume during Phase II, with numerous shipments of fine quality glazed stonewares and porcelains from southern Chinese kilns being sorted in the Satingpra citadel and re-exported from there, westwards along its canals or southwards down the coast. The Satingpra citadel contains one of the densest concentrations of ceramic debris - mainly Chinese - found outside a burial site in South East Asia. It was clearly a centre for the collection and rediffusion of trade wares of many kinds, among which the ceramic debris was the most durable. Since the citadel was almost certainly the palace area, the concentration of trade debris in this place evokes an image of trade under royal supervision or, at the least, royal licence.

The burden of shipping on the central canal passing through the capital city must, by the 11th century, have been so heavy that duplicate canals were constructed immediately to the North and South of it to similar dimensions. Whereas in Phase I, between the 6th and 9th century, there were 95.7 kilometers of navigable canals operating on the Satingpra Peninsula, in Phase II this rose to 160 linear kilometers in the core hydraulic territory alone (excluding the northern and western extensions). Areas on the Satingpra Peninsula that were not previously included in the hydraulic network were now served by it and artefacts from foreign and local trade begin to appear in the archaeological records of almost all sites from this time onwards. This fact points to a much higher degree of commercial integration of all parts of the Satingpra polity during Phase II of this urban civilization. In spite of the appearance of Indonesian cultural influences which dominated the religious art, architecture and inscriptions of Satingpra's urban Phase II, its rural economy was not affected: the technology employed on the Satingpra hydraulic system remained unchanged. Field boundaries, field sizes and dyke plantings with sugar palms (*Borassus flabellifer*) preserved the same characteristics as in Phase I and no traces have so far been found of the distinctive rice-grain type developed in Central Java - *Oryza javanica*.

While the significance of the Satingpra navigable canal system, linking the South China Sea to lakes, rivers and the Indian Ocean almost continuously, is obvious in the domains of trade and administration, its impact in local agriculture was no less profound. During urban Phase I, 6th to 9th centuries, the great canals and tanks made an estimated total of 6,079,046m<sup>3</sup> of fresh water available for irrigation (Satingpra I, Table 37). In Phase II this total had risen to 7,678,160m<sup>3</sup> (ibid., Table 38) while during this phase the land area under irrigation trebled (ibid., Table 14). A close study of the sediments and debris occupying the beds of the Satingpra canals and tanks has, however, revealed a mixed situation composed of dynamism and decline, both of which need to be taken into account if one is to see clearly the complex relations

between the ancient environment and man; between the hydraulic system and the Satingpra polity.

The large-scale canal network was superimposed on the pre-existing village works during Phase I of Satingpra's urban history. The mobilization of men and materials for this work probably originated in Satingpra itself, as the central canal is the oldest as well as the shortest and most important of the whole system. The benefits to both trade and agriculture accruing from the operation of that canal assisted the urbanization of Satingpra and the imposition of its authority over the surrounding villages. The extension of the great canal network reflects the extension of its authority. The expertise and the labour for these works were provided by the villages. The homogeneity of canal and field types throughout the three phases of Satingpra's urban history probably reflect a higher degree of cultural continuity in the villages than in the capital. The villages were strung out along the great canal courses and not more than 5km of canal construction and maintenance seem to have fallen on average to each village (see Figures 6,7 hydraulic service villages).

The construction techniques employed on the Satingpra canals and tanks were not arduous. Thanks to the stable, blocky clay soils that were exploited wherever possible, there was no need for elaborate linings of brick or stone as in some cases in Burma and Cambodia. The main supply of water came from the subterranean water table, which remains high in the Satingpra area throughout the year. Therefore they had no need to construct vast reservoirs like those of the Pyūs and the Khmers, which could be charged only during the rainy season and were obliged to store as much water as possible. When water was drawn from the Satingpra canals and tanks, it replaced itself according to the levels of the water table and the lakes at that moment.

If the Satingpra canals and tanks were relatively simple to dig, the system as a whole was technically sophisticated and well maintained. It was very skilfully inserted into very narrow environmental parameters of land height and slope. To work beneficially it had to prevent salt water from the sea from invading the system, as the Satingpra soils already possessed a certain degree of salinity. Natural environmental conditions were harnessed to provide salinity barriers against the sea. The isthmian ranges receive heavy rains in the March-April period which do not reach the Satingpra Peninsula. They recharge the lakes, however, and the ancient canal network was skilfully aligned so that a large part of it could benefit from the rising lake waters which produced a short-lived but valuable replenishing of the canal holdings by means of a reversal of flow in the canals (Figure 8). In an almost flat landscape, the ancient canals and tanks were the only large depressions. During the rainy season, they inevitably received heavy sedimentation and this had to be removed if the hydraulic works were to remain efficient. Our coring programme in the sediments occupying the canal and tank beds has uncovered a large body of information about the approximate chronology of the different parts of the hydraulic system, the varying stages of its construction, the standards of maintenance and the stages of its decline (Satingpra I, pp. 139-44 and 162-68). These results show that maintenance standards were high for many centuries during the whole of Phase I but showed some decline in tank maintenance during Phase II, in the 12th century. While total canal lengths were greatly increased during Phase II, tanks were not efficiently maintained let alone

increased in number or size, with the result that their relative contribution to the total volume of irrigation water available - which in Phase I had been equal to that of the large canals - dropped after the 12th century (*ibid.*, Table 38 and p.180). Some fifty years later, the maintenance levels of some of the major canals of the Satingpra core territory were also declining, even though the great trans-isthmian and northern canal extensions were being built at this very time.

### Internal Stresses of the Hydraulic System

While parts of the hydraulic system were expanding, between the 11th and 13th century other parts were sinking below their optimum level. These internal stresses and contradictions have been traced in the sediments and debris now occupying the beds of the ancient hydraulic works. In origin, and for at least five centuries thereafter, the large-scale hydraulic works at Satingpra were technically efficient and beneficial in their effects. But, because of the specific features of the Satingpra environment which have been outlined above, their maintenance needs were considerable. The great canals in particular were major consumers of the labour and materials available in the Satingpra polity. These appear to have been provided by the cultivators benefiting from the hydraulic works, on a seasonal basis, in the manner familiar from contemporary records of Burma, Java and Cambodia. Whereas the northern extensions of the Satingpra canals were into populated territory which no doubt provided the necessary labour, the trans-isthmian extensions - comprising two canals each c.12km long x 10m wide x 3.65m deep - were into thinly-populated areas. The construction and maintenance work on these canals, which was moderately heavy, could only be achieved by diverting labour away from the core territory and the work of cultivation and maintenance to be done there.

These decisions involved not only the sacrifice of one area for the sake of another, but also a preference for one sector of the Satingpra economy over another. They suggest a decisive preference among the Satingpra elite of Phase II for mercantile rather than agrarian interests. The trans-isthmian extensions provided very valuable facilities to trade and communications across the isthmus towards northern Sumatra and Sri Lanka; they made only a slight contribution, however, to the volume of agricultural yields. Above all, they made significant demands on the limited pool of cultivators from the core territory whose labour was needed to maintain them. Internal stresses and imbalances of this kind became visible in the Satingpra hydraulic system - and by inference in the economy in general - during Phase II from the 12th century onwards. The hydraulic system as a whole was still working, but some parts were being sacrificed to others. In particular, the tanks, longitudinal and branch canals which were closely linked to local transport, irrigation and agriculture were being sacrificed to the needs of the central Satingpra canal and the trans-isthmian extensions whose primary impact was on long-distance commerce and communication rather than on agriculture. In the longer term, however, if any part of an integrated hydraulic network is neglected, the whole system suffers and Satingpra was no exception to this rule. By the end of the 13th century, its irrigated lands and harvest yields were shrinking, with ineluctable consequences for the quality of the remaining canals. Trade levels declined during this century as well

and the quality of its urban life was diminished as evidenced by the abandonment of many monastic centres, two metal-working sites and the contraction of ceramic production at Kok Moh at this time. One can, from the evidence uncovered in the excavations of Satingpra's land sites and adjacent canal sediments, see how the interests of commerce, industry and agriculture were kept in balance up to the 12th century. The preference given to the first during that century created a disequilibrium in the hydraulic system which was eventually to affect all sectors of the economy and the strength of the state itself.

A second major attack took place on the capital city in the late 13th century, from which its recovery was weak and short-lived. Poor-quality repairs were carried out on the fortifications, and the central canal was still navigable at the beginning of Phase III.[6] The trade debris deposited during this period dropped sharply in quality and quantity, however, reflecting the drop in negotiable resources due to the decline of the remaining canals. Agricultural yields from most of the Satingpra territory fell back towards subsistence levels as the sources of irrigation water disappeared (Figure 9). A final attack launched around 1340 devastated the Satingpra site. By that time none of its canals was navigable. Its large-scale hydraulic works had ceased to function as a network, though some short sections of former canal beds were used as tanks and fish ponds. Most canal and tank beds were converted into ricefields. To the present time they form the most valuable riceland because of the sub-surface percolation of fresh water along the ancient canal beds. Meagre irrigation continued in the post-urban period in the form of village ponds with harvest levels at, or about, subsistence requirements.

### Hydraulic Systems and the South East Asian Polity

Satingpra has yielded only three short religious inscriptions. What we know about the eight hundred years of its urbanized history and its approximately four hundred years of pre-urban development, has been recovered from the archaeological research outlined in this paper. At present, Satingpra is the only complex of sites in South East Asia where we have such a large body of data about the economic infrastructure: hydraulic works, agriculture and trade in relation to the rise and fall of individual sites.

But Satingpra shares a number of features with the civilizations of the Khmers, Pyüs and the Mõns of Central Thailand and the Trans-Bassac Plain. All are situated in the drier and seasonally differentiated environments of this tropical region; all are on secondary tracts of alluvium. The Pyüs, Khmers and the Mõns of Satingpra and the Trans-Bassac Plain all developed extensive hydraulic works to regulate the extremes of their natural aquatic environment. Further research is needed to determine whether the Dvarāvātī sites of Central Thailand possessed hydraulic works. In the aerial photographs presented by Mr Srisakra Vallibhotama at the conference I noted what looked like cropmarks of ancient canals in and around each Dvarāvātī city site he discussed;[7] but until now they have not been studied. Among the inhabitants of Satingpra, however, we have firm evidence of the regular construction of hydraulic works of different kinds and on widely differing scales - village tanks and field channels; short, medium and long-distance canals; cattle ponds, great royal reservoirs, temple and

stupa tanks; moats both sacred and secular, functional and ritual. For the Mōns of the Trans-Bassac, the data are confined to the large long-distance canals and the moats of Oc-êo.

Without the surpluses obtained by irrigated agriculture, it is unlikely that an urban concentration of non-food-producers could have been fed in any of these habitats. Thus irrigation, commodity production and the successful extraction of agricultural surpluses preceded and accompanied urbanization and the rise of these early states. Furthermore, the extent of the traces of a homogeneous and integrated hydraulic system have been used as important guides to the extent of the ancient polity concerned, side-by-side with studies of the distribution patterns of cultural artefacts common to the sites of each region. On the whole, this method is both valid and useful as long as certain inherent limitations are respected. Once one has acquired the techniques and experience to recognize and follow the cropmarks of ancient hydraulic works in a tropical landscape,[8] they can lead to the discovery of sites that would be difficult to recognize by other means. They provide an incomparable, broad perspective on a whole pattern of related settlements, associated monuments and their essential context of irrigated fields. It does not follow, however, that where no hydraulic works existed there were no ancient settlements or that only the low rainfall areas along smaller rivers were the scene of permanent settlement in the last centuries BC and the first centuries AD. As mentioned at the beginning of the summary of the Satingpra hydraulic development, for every village that created irrigated fields there were several others in the same locality that depended on lower yields from unirrigated agriculture. Such sites, however, imprinted themselves so faintly on the landscape that it is difficult for the archaeologist to locate them without the presence of better defined, irrigated sites in the vicinity. In the heavier rainfall areas of South East Asia, ancient settlements of an enduring kind are likely to have existed as well, but very few have so far been found. Kuala Selinsing is one example of this kind. Encroachments of the sea on the land, the unresponsiveness of wet evergreen forest to aerial survey and the environmental impediments to surface survey combine to make archaeological fieldwork in these habitats sporadic, slow and often unrewarding unless chance discoveries have already opened the way. Furthermore, the orientation of such sites being marine or riverine, they too often imprinted themselves very lightly on the land and yield more to studies by underwater archaeology than to land-based strategies such as those outlined in this paper.

To return, then, to the pattern of settlement with which this paper is concerned, it can be said that the secondary tracts of alluvium, the smaller but highly seasonal rivers and the drier climates jointly formed an environment that offered both possibilities and pressures to the ancient settlers.

The significant stages of early urbanization and state formation that have been traced by archaeological research in South East Asia as a whole have developed in contexts of shrinking or limited resources rather than in the overwhelmingly favoured areas. The former were the forcing houses for survival strategies such as irrigation, dyke and field management which could eventually lead on to substantial and more predictable harvest levels, while the latter may so have facilitated subsistence levels of production that the pressures for the formation of



larger and more efficient socio-economic units were largely absent.

In the face of the alternating pressures of seasonal flooding and seasonal aridity, communities over a wide area of South East Asia grouped together to create the hydraulic works that moderated the extremes of both these seasons. My hypothesis is that they did so firstly as a survival technique in the struggle for mere subsistence and then found that wider applications of the same technology led on the surpluses. These were followed in some cases by social stratification and urbanization. The water forces and volumes surging down the secondary rivers in flood were great, but not as overwhelming as those of the three great rivers - the Irrawaddy, Chao Phraya and Mekong. The hydraulic techniques developed by the protohistoric, classical and early mediaeval societies of lowland South East Asia were only capable of governing the waters of secondary rivers and distributing them over wide areas of the landscape, thereby transforming agricultural yields. These hydraulic endeavours were marked by occasional failures and frequent repairs, but survived for centuries and in some cases, for millennia.[9] The movement into the great river valleys and deltas of mainland South East Asia, on the other hand, took place at a relatively late date, using different hydraulic and agricultural techniques and often new grain types as well.

The scale of the ancient hydraulic enterprises grew in parallel with the creation of grain reserves and the capabilities of the local or central co-ordinating bureaucracies - village, provincial or royal. There are a number of epigraphic references of the Pagan and Angkor periods to the royal expenditures on the greater hydraulic works - great tanks, canals and sluices - and the merit-making significance of such works for a just king - a *dharmarāja*. It is very possible that the inscriptions - the exclusive domain of the royal bureaucracy and urbanized elite - exaggerate the role of the elite in irrigation. In any case, immediately below the co-ordinating officials of the larger hydraulic works lay the peasantry whose traditions of co-operation in agriculture and firm grasp of hydraulic technology were indispensable for the creation and maintenance of such works. The peasants were themselves the first beneficiaries of hydraulic works purely for irrigation, such as the Pyū and Khmer works; the state benefited in the second instance when the irrigation works were fully functional and brought about greater harvests, upon which the usual royal taxes of at least 5 to 10 per cent were also proportionately enhanced. Hydraulic systems of mixed purpose - transport as well as irrigation - such as the Satingpra system were rare in South East Asia. They brought benefits to both the state and the peasantry as soon as the network was linked up. Such systems existed at Satingpra and on the Trans-Bassac Plain. Where they existed, they clearly offered to the state an instrument for regulating and enhancing its position in maritime trade. It is significant in this perspective that the Satingpra hydraulic system was fortified (Figures 6 and 7, guard-villages).

The impressive scale of some of the royal hydraulic works in Asia can easily blind us to the fact that the local peasantries were building small-scale hydraulic works all the time on their own initiative, with their own resources. For every royal *baray* of Angkorian proportions, there were hundreds of small-scale Khmer *barays* serving the village lands. The same is true elsewhere, not only in the territories of the Pyū and Satingpra, but also in China on which Wittfogel based his

views of hydraulic society, agro-managerial bureaucracy and oriental despotism. At most times and in most areas of Asia, the greater part of the hydraulic systems functioning were small-scale systems created and maintained by village labour and materials because it was in their own interest to do so. In large-scale works, where labour and materials were mobilized from a large number of villages (usually those that would later receive the irrigation water), the role of a higher level of bureaucracy may have been important; even there, as Professor de Casparis has told us, epigraphic evidence from Java suggests the existence of socio-economic units for this kind of horizontal co-operation on an inter-village basis without resorting to the vertical mobilization by a higher authority. Certainly I have observed that **subak** associations in Bali currently provide formalized conventions for inter-village and inter-**subak** co-operation which are believed to be very old in origin. In **Satingpra I**, Part V, the roles of central and local structures in the creation and maintenance of hydraulic works in South India and both upland and lowland South East Asia up to the 14th century are reviewed.

Wittfogel's deductions about the kind of society implied by the existence of major hydraulic works are too well known to require repetition at length here.[10] He is surely correct in seeing the hydraulic undertakings of Asian societies as impressive in their scale, durability and economic impact. By conceiving that they owed their existence to a specifically Asian form of despotism whose arm was the "agro-managerial bureaucracy", he creates a simplistic picture of power, monopolized by a few and exercised by them on a supine populace lacking "independent bodies strong enough to counterbalance and control the political machine ...".[11] In fact, major hydraulic works in South and South East Asia were an arena in which both royal and local social structures were active - the latter more continuously than the former - and where their separate economic interests coincided. Their respective activities seem to have been formalized as well as limited by codified and customary law, reinforced by powerful concepts of merit and **dharma**.

The degree of royal involvement may have determined the scale of the largest construction work but its successful maintenance thereafter also required strong local institutions and their support. Though the labour of construction was heavy while it lasted, it was quite limited both in duration and in relation to the scale of potential long-term benefits. In fact the comparative survey of ancient South and South East Asian reservoirs presented in **Satingpra I**, Part V, shows how the technology deliberately exploited an inverse (and highly beneficial) ratio between the volume of dam bunding and the volume of water thereby stored in any one locale. If most of the societies with major hydraulic works lie outside Europe, a look at the geophysical map of the world should suffice to show why.

Were the monopoly of power in the hands of agro-managerial society to have assumed the static and unidirectional forms envisaged by Wittfogel, one would expect the great hydraulic works to collapse with the state that created them unless consolidated by an immediate successor. There may be cases where this has happened; in others, such as **Satingpra** and **Angkor**, the decline of the hydraulic system began well before the collapse of the state. In yet others, the hydraulic works have outlived many states, serving them all and surviving long periods without a state. The **Pyü** hydraulic works in Burma have endured in

precisely this way. Created between the 3rd century BC and the 4th century AD, the weirs, tanks and canals served to produce agricultural surpluses for many centuries in the Yin, Nawin, Kyaukse and Mū districts and to support urbanization and the formation of early states at Beikthano, Śrī Kṣetra, Halin and Hmaingmaw. The hydraulic works survived the long interregnum between the destruction of the Pyū state in the early 9th century and the rise of Pagan in the mid-11th century. Their capacity to survive and to continue to serve irrigated agriculture was demonstrated again in the fragmentation of the state after the destruction of the Pagan court, and again after Ava, Amarapura and Mandalay. Though parts of the distributary systems became clogged with silt, other parts were cleared and kept operational by local initiatives so that at no time have any of the ancient Pyū irrigation networks been completely abandoned. Life-giving waters are still reaching the dry fields of Central Burma through these systems today. Their survival has often been partial and is largely due to the self-interested but limited efforts made by the local villagers. Exceptional works like the Kāveripak tank and the Māmāṇḍur tank in South India and the Meiktila tank in Burma have never been breached or fallen into disrepair: the two former have rendered more than a millennium of continuous service, while the latter has given at least two millennia. They might with much justification be called hydraulic works greater than the state,[12] in the sense that they have outlasted many. They owe part of their extraordinary durability, however, to the fact that they were less than the state, being deeply rooted in the local economies and serviced by village-level social institutions.

### Conclusion

The archaeological research summarized here has been carried out during the past fifteen years, particularly in South Thailand and Central Burma, but with comparative studies in Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia. The results show the secondary alluvia of South East Asia which possessed a seasonally differentiated climate to be the classical contexts in which early and successful hydraulic systems developed and in which the great majority of early urban sites and early polities arose.

It is not suggested that this was the only habitat in which urbanization took place, nor is it the case that all ancient villages in this ecological niche developed hydraulic works or that those possessing hydraulic works always produced larger and more complex socio-economic units. Indeed, the results of this research point to the need to uncouple many propositions that have become too axiomatically linked: great river valleys as the hearths of early civilizations; despotism and hydraulic works; the dichotomy between ancient agricultural societies and ancient trading communities; the undifferentiated character of peasant communities or the absence of commodity production in ancient and mediaeval South East Asia.

The principal example used here - the Satingpra sites which covered a large part of the isthmus between the 9th and 13th century - is representative of the kind of ecological niche occupied also by Oc-èo, Takèo, Sambor Prei Kuk, Angkor, Beikthano, Halin and Śrī Kṣetra as well as the Singhasari and Kediri areas of East Java. The Satingpra data reveal, moreover, an enduring interaction between maritime trade and

agricultural yields, from the 2nd to 14th century, which is not present to a comparable degree in the Pyū or Khmer sites. Profits from trade were "ploughed back" into extending the Satingpra hydraulic system and improving agricultural efficiency; agricultural surpluses were traded off from an early date - c.5th century - to grain-deficient communities in the highlands of the isthmus, North Sumatra and probably as far afield as the southern Philippines. Aromatic woods and food spices were obtained in return for rediffusion in long-distance trade. Commodity production in rice goes at least as far back in the Satingpra sites as the beginnings of urbanization in the 5th to 6th centuries. At other sites, such as Beikthano in Central Burma, it can be dated to the 1st century BC at the latest. In the Satingpra polity, commodity production was not limited to rice and the many products of the sugar palm, but extended also to three industries orientated towards export trade. These were iron and tin smelting (8th to 11th centuries) at Wat Khun Chang and Wat Sami, and fine Kendi production at the Kok Moh kiln of Ban Pah Ō (11th century). The regional distribution of these durable objects at sites ranging from North Sumatra to the southern Philippines acts as a series of signposts to the extent of Satingpra's trade in perishable commodities which was going on at the same time.

Arguments, whether of historical stasis, environmental determinism or the inevitability of progress, find their correctives too in the Satingpra data. The ancient relationships between man and his environment were reciprocal not unilateral, a dialogue not a monologue. The environment presented a limited range of options within which human enterprise expressed itself repeatedly, transforming the natural environment and the quality of human settlement in the process. But those transformed environs - physical and social - again presented a new but related and still limited range of options to reshaping by human endeavours. While a highly beneficial new aquatic regime was achieved by means of the hydraulic system and maintained in reasonable balance for some eight hundred years, the range of options also included the possibility of wrong choices, leading to imbalances in the allocation of resources, internal stresses and finally failures in the hydraulic system with ineluctable consequences not only on agriculture but also on trade and the fabric of the ancient state itself.

Adams has pointed out in his important studies of ancient Near Eastern societies and their irrigation works that the nuclear family is not a viable productive, defensive or managerial unit. He further says, "Canal construction and maintenance also requires the collective efforts of a substantial social unit, even though the available evidence for most periods points to this as a local initiative rather than the direct responsibility of a centralized managerial apparatus." [13] A voluminous literature [14] suggests that the East Asian village was and is capable of providing just such collective efforts on the basis of local initiatives over much greater geographic areas and much larger units of time than those affected by the periodic but well-documented activities of central government in this domain. The *subak* associations of Bali, the *kharuins* of the Kyaukse district and the *tuiks* of the Shwebo district of Central Burma are South East Asian local socio-economic units for the creation and management of hydraulic works. Their origins are of an unknown antiquity: the two last-named were already ancient in the Pagan period, while the Balinese irrigation works are believed to be prehistoric in origin.

In practice, such irrigation associations appear to have been capable of pursuing an autonomous managerial role during the centuries that elapsed between the rare but sometimes very important royal irrigation construction projects. Their links to the higher strata of the state - when they existed - lay in the provision of labour and orderly transfer of harvest surpluses. On the other hand, references to hydraulic works are numerous in the religious foundation inscriptions of Burma and Cambodia. Tanks and canals were clearly important fixed points in the ancient landscape, from which measurements were made of the fields and gardens being endowed for the maintenance of a temple, stupa or monastery. More significant still is the fact that land in the immediate vicinity of a tank appears to have had approximately double the value that the same area had further away from water.[15] This reflects the greater productivity of irrigated land and the correspondingly greater revenues enjoyed by its owners.

These facts remind us that irrigation systems operated in many different ways, depending on local factors such as slope and the qualities and volumes of water available. In many of the secondary alluvia of South East Asia with sharp seasonal differences in rainfall and waterflow, a small-scale irrigation development would have transformed the general situation, before irrigation, of marginally effective subsistence agriculture, into one where the degree of access to irrigation water varied from one landholding to another. The result would be that differences between "haves" and "have-nots" were then much more sharply drawn than under unirrigated, subsistence agriculture. The socio-economic stratification brought about by the operation of such irrigation systems can be glimpsed in the highly significant differential of land-values mentioned before, or perhaps in the important role of the *plon*, in association with the tanks, in the middle and lower Bassac, as noted by Michael Vickery in his study of Pre-Angkorian inscriptions in that area.[16] *Plon* may well represent a title acquired by an emerging ruling class in this area in the 7th century, on the basis of their privileged access to tank irrigation. While Marx envisaged that internal differentiation of the peasantry only occurred with the development of capitalism, there is much in our archaeological and epigraphic evidence to suggest that during the first millennium AD the uneven impact of irrigation in certain societies unleashed an internal differentiation of the South East Asian peasantry in a significantly different socio-economic context.

A similar situation may have prevailed in Central Java in the 7th and 8th century, for one inscription lists no fewer than nineteen official titles of functionaries at the village level, of which five clearly refer to irrigation duties: *matamwak*, *hulu wuatan*, *hulair*, *mpu tamwak* and *matamwak mula*. [17]

During the pre-urban phase and urban Phase I at Satingpra, 4th to 6th and 6th to 9th centuries respectively, only part of the arable land was served by the hydraulic system (Figure 3). [18] Economic differentiation and social stratification must have become pronounced during the pre-urban phase as a result of the inequalities of access to irrigation water. A minority of landholdings produced greatly increased yields which, together with the profits from trade (probably also unevenly distributed among the population), provided the economic basis for urbanization by the end of the 5th century. The degree of social stratification experienced in the pre-urban period would have increased

markedly after urbanization with the emergence of secular and sacred hierarchies and the further diversification of the economy into specialized craft and commodity industries and the upsurge in long-distance maritime trade. These changes can be traced archaeologically at Satingpra in the successive rows of fortifications around the citadel area to protect and also separate the rulers from the people, in the numerous vestiges of religious monuments and statuary, and in the range of artefacts left behind by craftsmen and traders. Interestingly enough, during urban Phase II, when all the arable land in the core territory of the Satingpra complex received irrigation water (Figure 5), there is nothing to suggest a reduction of internal social and economic differentiation within the population. On the contrary, this period of simultaneous consolidation, expansion and decline of the hydraulic system also witnessed further specialization among and within the villages - hydraulic service, guard duties, monastic communities, ceramic industry and metallurgy among others (Figures 6,7). However, with the decline of harvest yields and the contraction of the hydraulic system from late Phase II and throughout Phase III (Figure 9), Satingpra's population clearly also diminished both in size and in diversity: monasteries and industrial sites were abandoned; the density of occupation debris in the palace area declined; no large images or monuments were fashioned; and the volume and value of trade in Chinese ceramics dropped sharply.

Very similar schemata, showing the unequal impact of the benefits of irrigation[19] and the social stratification associated with it, could probably be constructed for parts of Cambodia from at least the 7th to the 13th centuries, for Burma from at least the 2nd century BC to the 13th century, and possibly for Java from the 7th to the 13th centuries. On the other hand, there are numerous examples in South East Asia and East Asia where local irrigation societies have successfully constructed and managed hydraulic systems over very long periods of time without internal socio-economic differentiation or urbanization taking place. In studying the different effects produced by different irrigation systems upon society, one must recognize the outstanding importance of the mode of operation and the relative degree of impact of the irrigation water on individual landholdings. In Bali, where much value attaches to the machinery for settling water disputes, the impact of irrigation water is, or is seen to be, relatively equitable. The cohesiveness of the *subak* association is strong, to the point of over-riding caste differences among members. In historic times, aristocracy in Bali has been associated with conquest, or at least military prowess, rather than with the rise to a dominant position in the hydraulic-agrarian network. Similar cases of irrigation societies without social stratification or urbanization exist in the Philippines, Sumatra and on the piedmont slopes of North Vietnam. Again, it is the case that the hydraulic systems of Central Burma, which played an important role in the ancient urbanization of the Pyū and Pagan periods, have survived the collapse of those ancient states and have at times pursued a "post-urban", autonomous existence under the management of the local *kharuin* or *tuik* committees.

The dialogue between ancient man and his environment in South East Asia was protracted and complex. In this paper, I have made a first attempt to define the specific lowland environmental niche in which the majority of early cities and states discovered so far in South East Asia

have developed. Far from being an overwhelmingly favourable environment, it was one where only very marginal agricultural returns were possible under natural conditions. The proximity of secondary rivers and small streams made these habitats one of the earliest spheres of man's experimentation with water control, diversion and storage in South East Asia. (The other ecotype for early South East Asian works is found in the upland catchment-channel systems of the Gio-linh, Luzon and Bali varieties.) In a minority of cases, lowland prehistoric villages with incipient hydraulic systems underwent social stratification and economic diversification, leading on to urbanization and state formation. In attempting to establish the real character of this part of man's dialogue with his environment, namely the reciprocal influences exerted by societies on hydraulic systems and vice versa, we need to look in detail at the way these systems operated. In particular, factors such as water volumes, water retention of the soils, equality or inequality of man's water access, and the presence or absence of social mechanisms of inter-village co-operation in water management are those which are useful in understanding why larger polities developed in certain areas and not others and what part was played in the process by hydraulic works.

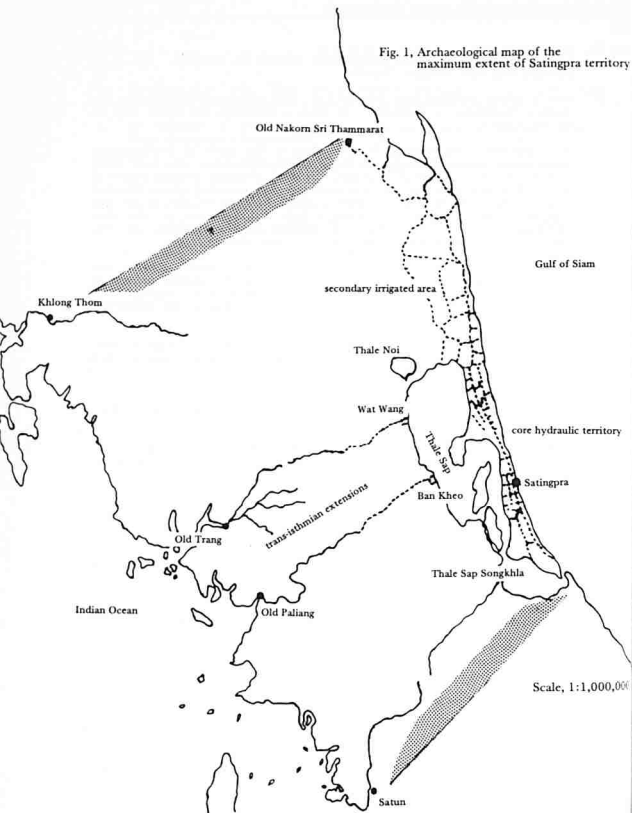
## NOTES

1. Groslier, B.P. 1973: "Pour une géographie historique du Cambodge". *Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer*, 102, pp.337-79 and Figures 1 and 2.
2. Cf. Malleret, L. 1957-62: *L'Archéologie du Delta du Mékong*. Paris, Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 4 vols.
3. This work has been carried out under the National Research Council of Thailand and with the co-operation of the Fine Arts Department. Full acknowledgements and scientific results on new discoveries, ancient agriculture, hydraulic works and their regional affinities are given in, Stargardt, Janice 1983: *Satingpra I, the Environmental and Economic Archaeology of South Thailand*. Oxford, British Archaeological Reports and Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Studies in SE Asian Studies 1.
4. Most recently in Groslier, B.P. 1979: "La Cité Hydraulique Angkorienne: exploitation ou Surexploitation du Sol". *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, LXVI, pp.161-202.
5. See Stargardt, Janice: *The Ancient Pyü of Burma and their Relations with India and South East Asia*. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2 vols. Vol.I: *The Ancient Hydraulic Works and Early Urbanization*. In press.
6. See *Satingpra I*, Tables 1 and 2a: *The Stratigraphy of the Satingpra Citadel; and Chronology and Cultural Sequence of Satingpra*.
7. See also site plans in Pongsiri Wanasin and Thiva Suphajanya 1983: *Ancient Cities in Thailand*. Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Rept., but again without recording the traces of hydraulic works.
8. This involves very different training and experience from the interpretation of aerial photographs of cool temperate zones, not only because of differences in soils and flora, but because ricefields are cut into the ancient land forms transforming them more profoundly than temperate fields do. The cropmarks are consequently fainter and often more fragmentary than in the temperate zones.
9. This pattern of ancient hydraulic activity also appears to hold good for East Java, where the ancient works known as the Brantas works were in fact located on the secondary rivers - its tributaries - rather than on the main Brantas river, a point not made previously. Cf. Maclaïne Pont, H. 1926: "Eenige oudheidkundige gegevens omtrent de Middeleeuwschen bevoeiingstoestand van de zoogenaamde 'woeste gronden van Trik'", *Oudheidkundig Verslag Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië*, pp.100-29; van Naerssen., F.H. 1938: "De Brantas en haar waterwerken in den Hindu-Javaanschen tijd", *de Ingenieur* LIII, 7, p.65 et seq.
10. Wittfogel, K.A. 1957: *Oriental Despotism, a comparative study of total power*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
11. *Ibid.*, p.49.
12. In contrast to Wittfogel's proposition of "a State stronger than society", *ibid.*, p.49.
13. Adams, R.McC. 1974: "The Mesopotamian Social Landscape: A View from the Frontier", in *Reconstructing Complex Societies, an archaeological colloquium*. Ed. Charlotte B. Moore, Suppl. to *Bull. Amer. Sch. Or. Res.* 20. See also the same author's "Historical Patterns of Mesopotamian



13. (continued)  
Irrigation Agriculture", in **Irrigation's Impact on Society**. Ed. T.E. Downing and McG. Gibson, Tucson.
14. For a recent addition, see Leach, E.R. 1984: "Keynote Address to the Sydney Conference on Feudalism", of which a typescript was kindly sent me by the author.
15. This was noted with surprise by Mrs Jacob in her paper on Pre-Angkorian inscriptions, **London Colloquy on Early South East Asia**. Ed. R.B. Smith and W. Watson, Oxford 1979, p.416. In fact, the same relative values of irrigated to non-irrigated land are revealed over a period of six hundred years in the Burmese and Cambodian inscriptions, from the 7th to the 13th centuries. See Stargardt, **The Ancient Pyü**, Vol.1, chapter 2. See also: **Inscriptions du Cambodge**, K.79; **Inscriptions of Burma**, pl.73, 128, 240, 248, 370; and **Epigraphia Birmanica** III, D and VIII, A.
16. See Vickery's contribution to this volume. If, as Vickery suspects and Christian Bauer confirms, **plon** is **Mōn** in origin, this would support my hypothesis that the lower and middle Bassac plains were originally **Mōn** areas of settlement assimilated by the Khmers during the Angkorian period.
17. van Setten van der Meer, N. 1979: **Sawah Cultivation in Ancient Java, aspects of development during the Indo-Javanese period, 5th to 15th century**. Canberra Oriental Monograph Series, Australian National University Press.
18. See **Satingpra I**, Part III, **Rice and Demography at Satingpra**, pp.116-25, Tables 21, 22.
19. Adam's conflicts between upstream and downstream communities are one aspect of this problem (see note 13); distances from tanks, land-slopes, water volumes, sedimentation rates and salinization are others.

Fig. 1, Archaeological map of the maximum extent of Satingpra territory



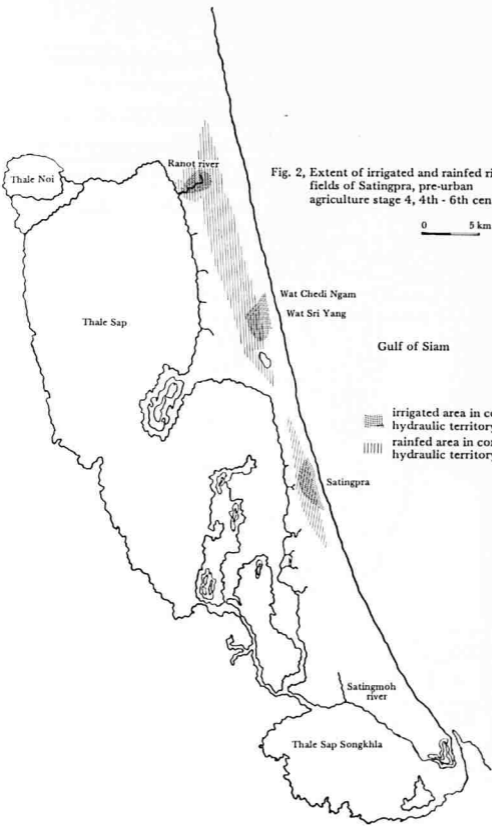
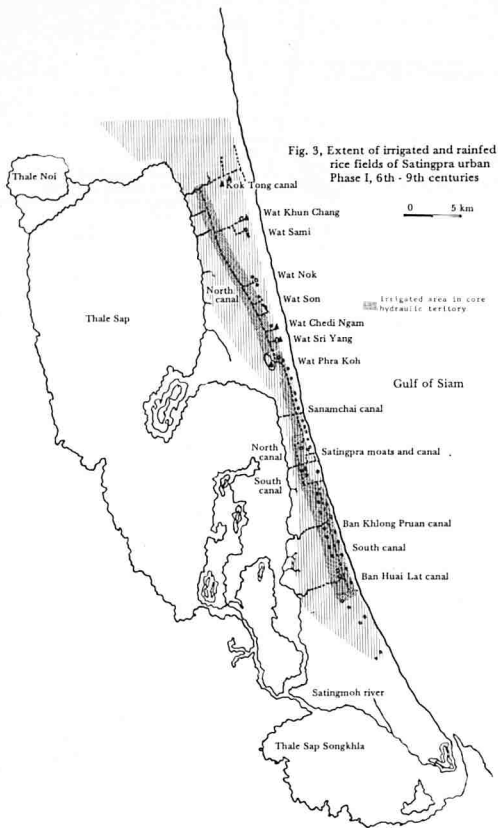


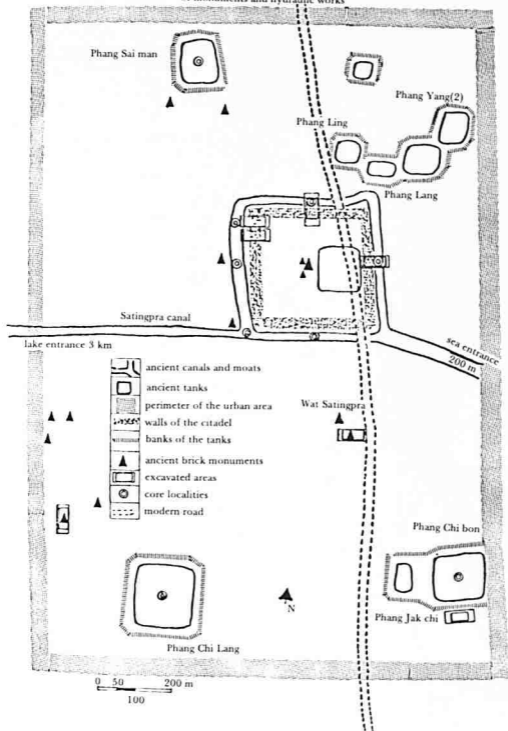
Fig. 2, Extent of irrigated and rainfed rice fields of Satingpra, pre-urban agriculture stage 4, 4th - 6th centuries

0 5 km



1st lateral canal North

Fig. 4. Archaeological map of the urban area, Satingpra, showing distribution of monuments and hydraulic works



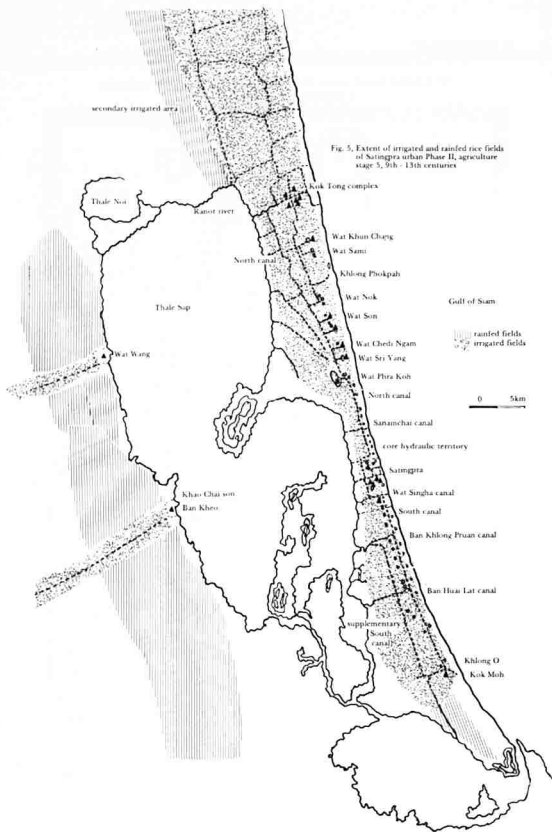
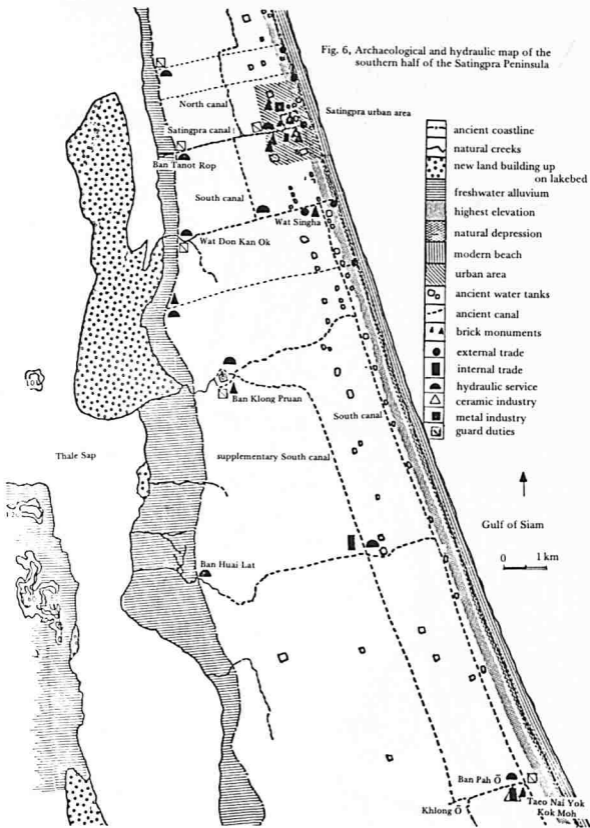


Fig. 5. Extent of irrigated and rainfed rice fields of Satingpra urban Phase II, agriculture stage 5, 9th - 13th centuries

Fig. 6. Archaeological and hydraulic map of the southern half of the Satingpra Peninsula



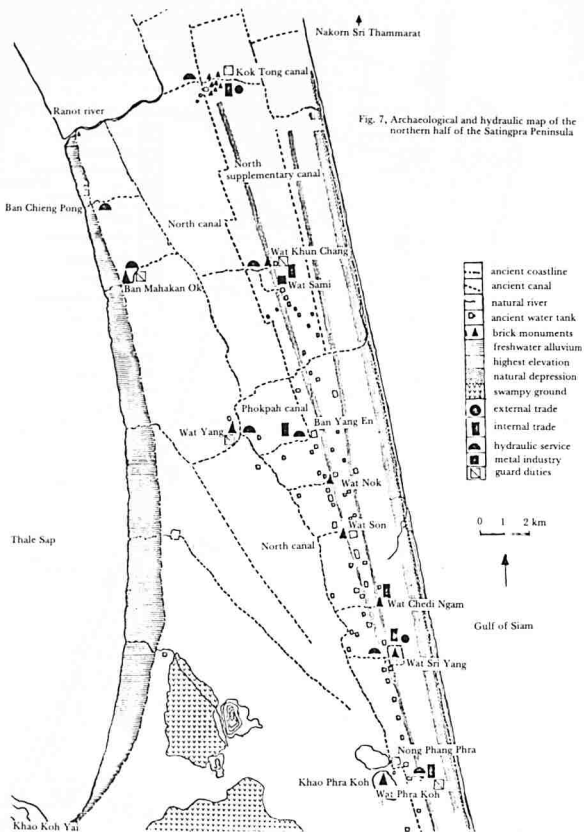


Fig. 7. Archaeological and hydraulic map of the northern half of the Satingra Peninsula

- ancient coastline
- - - ancient canal
- natural river
- ◻ ancient water tank
- ▲ brick monuments
- ▨ freshwater alluvium
- highest elevation
- ◌ natural depression
- ◌ swampy ground
- external trade
- ◻ internal trade
- ◻ hydraulic service
- ◻ metal industry
- ◻ guard duties

0 1 2 km



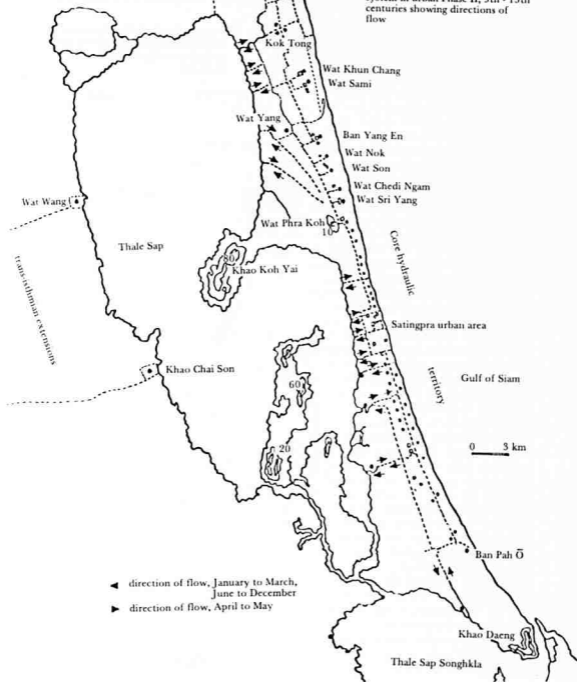
Gulf of Siam

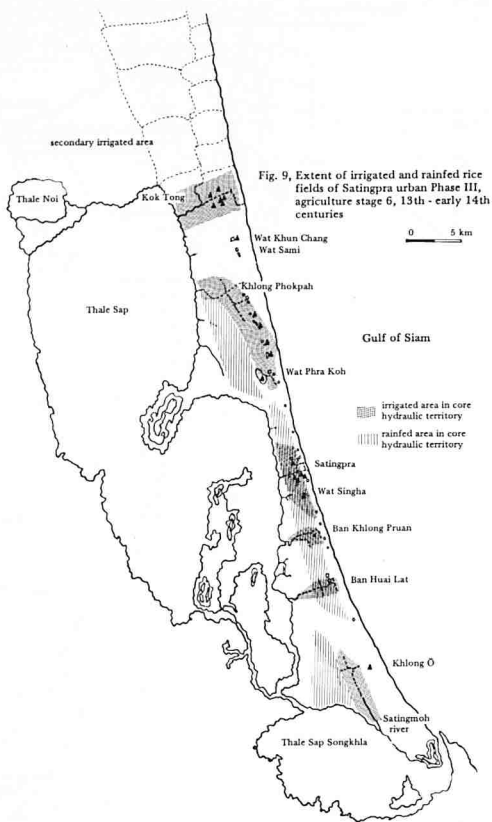


Nakorn Sri Thammarat

secondary irrigated area

Fig. 8. Extent of the Satingpra hydraulic system in urban Phase II, 9th - 13th centuries showing directions of flow





### 3

## Some Notes on Relations between Central and Local Government in Ancient Java

J.G. de Casparis

In an earlier paper, submitted to the Fourth Indonesian-Dutch Historical Conference at Yogyakarta, July 1983, I tried to analyse the history of the village community in Java during the period from c. A.D. 900 to 1400. Although there still remain numerous problems of detail there is, I think, little doubt concerning the principal rights and duties of the village communities and their members during the period just mentioned. In addition, we have a fair idea of the composition of central government, on which comparatively rich data are available in the Old Javanese texts and inscriptions. As to the relations between these two levels of government, I feel that the general picture is again fairly clear for the fourteenth century, thanks to the **Nāgarakērtāgama**, various other texts and inscriptions. Most of the important data (but excluding the **Pararaton**, for which we still have to rely on an edition of seventy years ago) have been collected, re-edited and commented on by Pigeaud in his monumental work on **Java in the Fourteenth Century**. It is true that there still remain numerous problems of detail relating to the precise meaning of a number of Old Javanese terms. Pigeaud may sometimes have been too much inclined to interpret words of uncertain meaning in the light of his admirable knowledge of the political, social and cultural institutions of the Mataram sultanate in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Yet, it seems clear that Majapahit was governed by a hierarchy of dignitaries and officials with a king at its apex, at least in the central part of the empire corresponding more or less to the present province of Jawa Timur (East Java). Although the villages appear to have possessed a considerable degree of autonomy as far as purely village matters were concerned, we also get the clear impression that the authority of the central government penetrated everywhere and no doubt functioned as a check to the decisions taken by local authorities.

In the above-mentioned paper I also gave some indications as to the manner in which such centralized control may have developed. In the twelfth century, during the period of the kingdom of Kaḍiri, groups of villages were combined into units called by the Sanskrit word **wiṣaya**, meaning "district". In one particular case in an inscription of the middle of the twelfth century such a district consisted of twelve villages, one of which functioned as its administrative centre (**rwawlas thāni, makādi dalam thāni**, i.e.: "twelve villages, in the first place the central village").[1] The number of villages in such a district may

have varied, but the example shows that such districts may have been comparable to the *kecamatan* of modern times. In the thirteenth century Ken Angrok (king Rājasa, c. A.D. 1222-1227) is credited with the institution of some administrative reforms by appointing regional chiefs (*juru kuwu*), thus increasing central government control.[2] In the Majapahit period we find the first references to the *wadana*, literally "mouth", possibly spokesmen, although one is inclined to regard this *wadana* as a function corresponding to that of the *wédono* of later times, i.e. chief of a district.[3] Probably in approximately the same period the villages were under the control of village chiefs, designated as *buyut*, literally: "great-grandfather", in some inscriptions.[4] The result is a tight hierarchy, which is quite reminiscent of that known to have existed in the eighteenth century and later. It should, however, be added that even in the Majapahit period there is much that still remains uncertain. Not only the terminology may have varied according to time and place, but it is also difficult to ascertain to what extent this picture is valid for the whole of eastern Java. As to other parts of the empire, except perhaps for Bali, the data are too scarce to permit any kind of reconstruction.

In this paper I shall try to analyse the manner in which government functioned during the earlier part of the ancient period, in particular during the time when direct control by the central government had not yet been elaborated in the form which it would adopt later. The period which I chose for that purpose is from c. A.D. 875 to 950. I am, of course, aware that some of my colleagues will object strongly to my plan to consider these three-quarters of a century as a period or a sub-period, for it is well known that in or around 929 there occurred a basic change in the early history of the island, viz. the transfer of central government and most of its institutions from central to eastern Java. This transfer, the causes of which are still unknown or controversial, is believed to divide the early history of the island into two well defined periods: the Central Javanese period till about 929 and the Eastern Javanese period from that year till about the end of the fifteenth century. It is not the right place here to examine the justification of this division. It is self-evident that the transfer of the centre of government from one part of the island to another must have carried important consequences, although the actual distance between the two centres cannot have been more than about 200 miles. But, as often happens in such cases, the true effects of the transfer are not felt until several generations later. In general it seems to me that, at least within the context of Javanese history, differences in time are more important than those of the site of the capital. Krom has already commented on the remarkable continuity between central and eastern Javanese institutions. He explained this continuity by assuming that the whole of the government machinery was transferred from one part of the island to the other, together with all or most of the population.[5] It is striking that in the inscriptions of Pu Sindok (c.929-947) we notice the same kinds of dignitaries and royal officials as in those of the preceding half a century. There are a few additional titles, in particular two *rakryān momahumaḥ*, presumably the king's private secretaries, as well as typically East Javanese titles, such as *Kanuruhan* and *Bawang*. These and a few other differences seem, however, to be of a minor nature, as similar differences are often noticeable within what is normally considered the same period. Major changes occur

in the eleventh and especially in the twelfth century during the reigns of Airlangga and the kings of the Kaḍiri period. Also in art and architecture Krom emphasized the continuity between the Central and early Eastern Javanese styles, and noted that monuments such as Caḍi Lor (near Nganjuk, Kēḍiri) and Gunung Gangsir (near Bangil, Pasuruan) continue Central Javanese traditions. There is no clear break at the beginning of the tenth century. What we call East Javanese style (or culture, in general) actually begins in the middle of the thirteenth century. One is therefore inclined to conclude that the difference is one of time rather than of place. I therefore feel quite justified in dealing with the three-quarters of a century as a coherent period.

In connection with the particular interest paid to Southeast Asian statecraft during the last ten or twenty years it may be useful to try to analyse the manner in which central and local government co-operated and interacted. As I pointed out earlier, one may regard Javanese society during this period as essentially consisting of a large number of village communities, each looking after its own affairs in consultation with its neighbours, on which the central government structure had been superimposed. The latter was composed of a hierarchy of officials with the king at the apex of the pyramid. As to the relations between the two systems of government I used the term social contract, implying that such relations were based on a tacit understanding of mutual rights and duties. It is obvious that such a relationship could function only if there was adequate machinery to ensure regular communications between the two levels of government. It is therefore important to try to ascertain the nature of this machinery. The principal question that arises in this context is: What were the means at the disposal of the king and central government by which they imposed their authority on the village communities in order to raise revenues, to exact different kinds of services and to maintain a certain degree of order and security?

Although this question cannot be answered at the present stage of our knowledge, I feel that it may be useful to try to interpret the available sources, i.e. the contemporary inscriptions, with a view to solving some aspects of the above problems. With modern computerized methods this can be achieved within a reasonable time, but it requires reliable readings of all or most of the inscriptions. In addition, linguistic comparison, especially of inscriptions in Old Balinese, but also of materials in other Austronesian languages, such as the older Buginese texts, may be helpful. At the present state of our knowledge we have to try to utilize the available materials as best we can.

Any answer to the question posed above must be based on an analysis of the channels of communications between the central government and the village authorities. The inscriptions reveal the existence of two formal or structural channels and at least three less formal or informal ones. The formal channels were:

1. royal officials,
2. landed nobility with titles such as *rakai*, *rakryān* and *pamēgat* (each with orthographic variants).

The less formal or informal channels were, in my view:

3. miscellaneous tax collectors known as those "who claim the king's property" (*mañilala drawya haji*),

4. religious authorities attached to temples, monasteries, hermitages and similar institutions,
5. direct contacts between villagers, in particular village elders, and the king or his direct subordinates.

I propose to discuss these five channels one after the other before trying to draw conclusions concerning the system as a whole.

### 1. Royal officials

The inscriptions invariably mention a number of lower officials always or mostly associated with the central government, but in many cases residing in the villages without apparently being integral parts of the village communities. Four titles clearly fall into this category. They are actually two pairs, on the one hand **patih** and **wahuta**, on the other **nāyaka** and **pratyaya**. At this stage it is necessary to discuss the meaning of these terms.

**Patih** is one of the most common terms used in Javanese administration from the oldest records till the present time, when the title is used for officials of intermediate rank, especially for the principal executive officer of a **bupati**, "regent". The most characteristic aspect of the term is that it normally designates a "second-in-command". In ancient times it is found with the prefix **a-** or **ma-** and preceded by **rakarayān** or **rakryān**, the latter being an abbreviated form of the former, no doubt based on pronunciation. **Rakarayān** or **rakryān mapatih** is used for the chief executive officer of the king, a kind of prime minister or grand vizir. The most famous of all those holding this title was, of course, Gajah Mada, who served two kings and one queen of Majapahit, viz. Jayanagara (1309-1328), Tribhuwana (1329-1350) and Hayam Wuruk (1350-1389). The title occurs, however, from the ninth century onward. In this context the word (**m**)**apatih** alternates with the sanscritized form **mahāmantri**. A not generally recognized synonym is (**m**)**apiñhai**, again in the forms **rakarayān** or **rakryān** (**m**)**apiñhai**. The word **piñhai** (**piñhe**) actually means "white" in Old Javanese, which has led scholars to believe that the word referred to monks and other clerics dressed in white. Comparison between corresponding places in different inscriptions leaves, however, no doubt that **patih** and **piñhai** are synonyms. As **piñhai** is a synonym of **putih**, "white", and **patih** and **putih** are quite similar in sound, **piñhai** could replace **patih** by a kind of **wangsalan**, common in classical and modern Javanese.

On a lower level, people designated as **patih** or **piñhai** could reside in villages where, however, as I already mentioned, they are never included in lists of village elders (**rāma**) or villagers enjoying full rights (**anak wanua** or **anak thāni**).[6] They were apparently "outsiders", and the same applies to those designated as **wahuta**, **nāyaka** or **pratyaya**. The term **wahuta** is still unexplained. As **nāyaka** and **pratyaya** are clearly of Indian origin (but not **patih**)[7] one may wonder whether the same could be the case with **wahuta**, and I once suggested such a possibility. Its trisyllabic form and especially the absence of kindred words in other Austronesian languages may strengthen the possibility of it being of Indian origin, and I once offered a conjectural etymology of the word as Middle Indic.[8] Whatever its etymology, there is little doubt that the meaning of **wahuta** is quite close to that of **patih** at the lower level (combinations such as **rakryān wahuta** do not occur). Both

**patih** and **wahuta** at this lower level were usually residents of villages, but it is quite unlikely that they resided in all the villages; probably only in the more important ones. In the inscriptions of Pu Siṅḍok there are a number that are regularly mentioned, such as the **patih kahyunan** (Jruju, lines 34-37), where he and members of his family all received presents, **patih i tugaran**, **patih pankur i waharu** (both *ibid*, 49), **piñhai kambang śrī** (Paradah I, 46), **wahuta parañkatan** (*ibid*, 47), **piñhai panigaran** (Paradah II, 48, 50) etc. A small number of places where **patihs** or **wahutas** were established can be identified with place names in the area around present Pare, Kēḍiri; others belong to the Malang area. These were apparently places of some importance, such as market villages and other centres. The **patih** was a person of some importance even at the local level, as appears from the fact that they often have representatives ("speakers" denoted by terms such as **paruḅar**, **parwuwus**, **tuhān mamuat uḅar** etc., all terms containing the base **uḅar** or **wuwus** meaning "speech"). At the ceremonial inauguration of a **sīma** (usually translated by "freehold", although it was actually a privileged and autonomous area, free from interference by officials and tax gatherers, but having special duties, often in connection with a religious foundation) there was, especially in the inscriptions of Pu Siṅḍok, a **patih** or **wahuta** said to **mangharap babak**, "start to till the soil". This was apparently a symbolic act, putting the first "spade" (actually rather the first **pacul**) in the soil. From these and other data one gets the clear impression that both **patihs** and **wahutas** were representatives of the central government, but active mainly at the local level. They are often mentioned in groups. Thus in one inscription of the reign of Pu Siṅḍok (Paradah II, 56) there were no fewer than eighteen **wahuta parañkatan**, and eight **patih (piñhai) kambang śrī**. Such numbers establish beyond doubt that the position of the **patihs** and **wahutas** was in no way comparable with that of **wēdonos** or **camats** of later ages.

As to their function little can be inferred from the inscriptions, but there is one kind of indication suggesting that they were mainly concerned with the maintenance of order and security. In a number of instances names of **patihs** or **wahutas** are followed by those of people carrying arms. Thus, in the above-mentioned inscriptions of Paradah II the **wahuta bayan** is followed by a **piluḅgah**, "lance-carrier" (line 58). More significantly perhaps, in the Panggumulan ("Kēmbang Arum") inscription of the time of Balitung, dated 902, the three **patihs** of line 24/25 included one **tunḅū durung**, "guardian of the rice sheds". As the villages had their own elders to take care of the supplies of (unhusked) rice (**hulu wēas** or **hulu wras**) one has to conclude that the **patih tunḅū durung** would have been in charge of the supplies of rice for the higher authorities, such as those with **rakai** or **pamēgat** titles, or even the king. Although the amounts of taxes on land are always mentioned as sums of money (i.e. weights of precious metal) in the inscriptions, it is unlikely that they should have been paid in this form. Relatively few gold and silver coins have been found in Java, and all those that have been found are of low denominations (**mā** = **māḅa**, literally: "bean", presumably corresponding to the weight of a particular kind of bean). In some cases, higher sums of money may have been paid in the form of rings (**simsim**) and other ornaments, but this entailed practical difficulties and cannot therefore have been the general practice. It therefore seems quite likely that the land tax was usually paid in kind in accordance with the value of the gold and silver weights mentioned.

Tax payments were made once or twice a year, in the latter case in the months of Caitra (March/April) and Asuji (September/October). The rice was, however, available after the harvest, which would not always coincide with the months mentioned. There must therefore normally have been a period of possibly a few months during which the rice had to be stored. During this time the supplies had to be protected against rats and other predators. This may well have been the duty of the **tuŋgū durung**. The latter would also see to it that each peasant paid his due or he would merely register the amounts contributed by each individual peasant. The **hulu wras**, on the other hand, was a village official, no doubt in charge of the communal supplies of rice. The same Panggumulan inscription also mentions three **wahutas** in line 26, stationed in two villages, but the third was the **pihujung** of the first. **Hujung** is a well-known word meaning "corner", but as **piluŋgah** clearly denotes a guardian armed with a lance, i.e. a "lancer", it would appear that **hujung** also denotes a pointed weapon. A **pihujung** would then denote a different kind of guardian.

One of the best known Old Javanese inscriptions, Balitung's "important character of the Kēḍu", as it has been baptized by Stutterheim, deals with the gift by King Balitung of land situated between the mountains Sumbing (Sumwing) and Sēḍoro (Susuḍara) - in other words, along the highway connecting the fertile plain of the Kēḍu with the no less fertile one of Bagēlen (the Sērayu valley). The road also provided access to the Dieng plateau, one of the most sacred places of the island. As is the case with some other inscriptions of the same king, this one, too, gives the considerations leading to His Majesty's decision. It is pointed out that the privileges were extended to five **patihs** for three reasons: 1. it is mentioned that these men had carried out numerous services (**buat haji**) for the king at the time of the royal wedding; 2. in addition, the five men had paid worship to the lords of Malangkuśwara, of Pūteśwara, of Kutusan, of Śilābhedeśwara, and of Tuleśwara every year without fail; and, finally, 3. it is said that the area "situated in between" (**antarālika**), i.e. presumably between the mountains just mentioned, was dangerous (**katakutan**); the five **patihs** were therefore ordered to protect the road. Of these three considerations the first two apply to the past and can be seen as a reward for the loyalty shown by the five men towards the king. The third consideration, however, is of a completely different nature: it relates to the future. The king's favour was not only a reward for past services, it also served a definite policy by the king, who was concerned about the security of the road and combined his reward with a practical measure. Such a measure would, however, only have a *raison d'être* if the five **patihs** could be expected to live up to the task confided to them by the king, i.e. they must have been able to protect the villagers and the travellers along the road. This would imply that their function, or at least an important aspect of their function, was of a military nature.

From these data it may be concluded that the function of **patihs** and **wahutas** on the local level was of a military nature or, at least, included military duties. They were probably military or police officers in service of the king or of other high authorities. Although the emphasis was no doubt on carrying out the king's duty of protecting his subjects, this does not, of course, exclude the possibility that the **patihs** and **wahutas** had duties of another nature as well. It is unlikely



that there should have been any strict separation between civil and military duties in ancient Java. It is quite possible that they also carried out certain administrative duties on behalf of the central government.

A point which has struck me particularly when going through a large number of inscriptions of this period is the fact that **patih** and **wahutas** are not mentioned as members of the staff of those whom I called landed nobility, i.e. those holding titles with **rakai**, **rakarayan** or **paməgat**. As will be elaborated in the following section, these authorities had a staff or an office consisting of usually between five and ten people.[8] No **patih** or **wahutas** are, however, mentioned among these groups. They would therefore appear to have been responsible to the central government.

In addition to the **patih** and **wahuta** there are two other terms indicating royal officials and sometimes mentioned together with **patih** and **wahuta**, especially among those barred from entry into a **sīma** (just before the list of the **mañilala drawya haji**) - **nāyaka** (**nayaka**) and **pratyaya**. The two terms also form a pair. Both are Sanskrit words, the former meaning "leader" in general with many special nuances, the latter has various meanings, such as "confidence" or, especially in Buddhist texts "condition" or "secondary cause".[9] Neither is, however, applicable to the use of these terms in Old Javanese inscriptions. As to **nāyaka** there is one definite indication that the function could include assessment of land for fiscal purposes. The copper-plate inscription of Paləpangan, better known as the Borobuḍur copper-plate because it originates from a village in the neighbourhood of the great monument, is dated A.D. 906 and deals with a conflict of opinion between the village elders of Paləpangan and a **nāyaka**, **Bhagawanta Jyotiṣa** by name.[10] The latter had assessed the ricefields of the village elders for tax, but the village elders appealed to the court for a re-assessment. The matter was brought to the attention of the highest authority in the land after the king, the grand-vizir (**mahāmantrī i hino**) and later King **Dakṣa**, who, after examining the matter, decided that the land should be re-assessed according to a different type of measurement, leading to a reduction of the land tax due. The inscription is important in that it shows that ricefields were, or at least could be, assessed on the basis of their measurements and not, or not only, on their (annual or semi-annual) yield. It also shows that the person carrying out the assessment was a **nāyaka**. Although this example does not exclude the possibility that **nāyakas** could have different functions as well, there is no clear indication that this should have been the case. All the numerous references to **nāyakas** seem consistent with the interpretation of the function as mainly concerned with the land tax. Such differences of opinion must have been almost as common as they are in modern times. This example therefore raises the question why this particular case was dealt with at such a high level and engraved on a copper-plate instead of an ordinary **lontar**. The answer to this question is suggested by the title of the **nāyaka**, introduced by the word **bhagawanta**, used for ascetics or high clerical authorities in literature and inscriptions, as well as by the fact that the village elders are not designated as **rāma**, the ordinary word, but as **rāmanta**, often used for village elders in **sīma** villages.[11] These points suggest that the ricefields involved stood in some relationship to a religious foundation, probably as a **sīma**. Taxes were therefore paid to the religious authorities, who had,

however, also a *nāyaka* in their service to carry out the correct assessments.

For the function(s) of the *pratyaya* the inscriptions do not give any indications, except for the fact that the word almost always occurs in close association with *nayaka*. As I noted earlier,[12] the term is also found in inscriptions of ancient Cambodia, where Coedès interpreted the term as a caretaker of property of the deceased. Whatever the precise meaning of the term, there can be little doubt that it denotes a function associated with the collection of revenue. *Nāyakas* and perhaps *pratyayas* were not the only people collecting revenue in the name of the king (or some other high authorities). There was also the miscellaneous list of the *mañilala drawya haji*, "those claiming the king's property", which will be discussed in Section 3.

## 2. Landed nobility

Before discussing this list it is necessary to deal with those whom I defined as "landed nobility", more precisely the authorities holding titles such as *rakai*, *rakryān* (*rakarayān*), or *pamēgat*. These titles are found with some variants. Instead of *rakai* one often finds *rake*, erroneously thought to be composed of *raka i*. Some editors of Old Javanese inscriptions even go so far as to transcribe *raka i* when the original reads *rake* or *rakai*. It is true that inscriptions sometimes give *sandhi* contractions such as *wihāre* for *wihāra i*, "the *wihāra* at ...", but such spellings are exceptional. We do not, however, find *raka i* in any original inscriptions. If it were a *sandhi* contraction one would also expect to find always or almost always the form *rake*, not *rakai*, but we find normally *rakai*, at least in the older documents. *Pamēgat* occurs with many variants such as *pamgat*, *pamaggat*, *pamgēt*, *pamēgēt* and all these five forms with initial *s* instead of *p* (*samēgat* etc.). It is generally agreed that *samēgat* etc. are contractions of *sang pamēgat* etc.,[13] whereas all the other forms are spelling variants due to difficulties in expressing the *pēpēt* in writing. In this paper the spelling differences applying to these titles are disregarded and the forms *rakai*, *rakryān* and *pamēgat* are used throughout (except, of course, in direct quotations from inscriptions). As to *rakai* and *rakryān*, it is clear that the terms are closely related, but they are probably not identical.

About the status of this "landed nobility" there is still much uncertainty. Even the very term "landed nobility" may be challenged, although it is based on the fact that in most of the cases the terms are followed by what seems to be a geographical name, often introduced by the particle *i*. But there are some difficulties. Many such titles occur in inscriptions of both central and eastern Java till about the middle of the tenth century. After that time they still occur, but tend to become rare or limited to a small number of titles. A number of *rakai* and *pamēgat* titles are regularly found associated with the names of ministers and councillors mentioned after the name of the king in inscriptions, whereas many others do not appear to have a direct association with central government. The titles most commonly associated with the court are *Rakai Hino*, *Halu*, *Sirikan*, *Wēka*, *Halaran*, *Panggūhyang* (or *Palarhyang*) and one or two others. Most of the other *rakai* and *pamēgat* titles seem to have no such association. As stated earlier, most of the titles occur in inscriptions both of central and of

eastern Java, but there are a few that are limited to eastern Java, notably Kanuruhan and Bawang. As the order in which the titles are enumerated in inscriptions reflects their ranks in the hierarchy it is clear that the **rakai** title was generally higher than the **pamēgat**, but there is one important exception: the Pamēgat i Tiruan is always mentioned as one of the first five authorities, preceding some **rakai** such as Halaran and Panggilhyang.

An important point is the correlation between the **Rakai** and **Pamēgat** titles and the names following the word **watak**, "group (of villages)". In most cases the names of villages mentioned in the inscriptions are followed by the word **watak** and another name, which in most cases is also found following **rakai** or **pamēgat**. Thus, one finds both **Rakai Halu** and villages said to be **watak Halu**, lit.: "(belonging to) the Halu group (of villages)". The same applies to the other titles. Many of these names also occur as names of villages, although this does not apply to the highest titles. No village names Hino, Halu, Sirikan, Wēka etc. are attested. In the case of Wēka, "son", this also seems unlikely to have been the case. Very probably **Rakai Wēka** is the title held by one of the king's sons. It therefore appears likely that expressions such as **watak Halu** mean that the village name preceding the expression belongs to the Halu "group" of villages, i.e. those villages from which the **Rakai Halu** drew some kinds of revenue.

As we have already seen, a number of these **rakai** and **pamēgat** titles belong to the highest authorities, whom we called ministers or councillors. The lists of these ministers vary considerably; there are hardly two inscriptions in which they are identical. It is difficult to know whether these differences indicate real changes or merely changes in protocol. Usually the number of these authorities is around a dozen, headed by the **rakarayān mapatih i hino** (or sometimes **i halu, sirikan** or another title). His function is comparable to that of a prime minister or grand-vizir.

In addition to these ministers there were a considerably larger number of others who also held **rakai** or **pamēgat** titles, but did not have any clear relations with the central government. Both those with and those without explicit relationships with the court appear to have had some authority over the villages belonging to the **watak** which is identical with the name in his title. Their authority over such villages included the right to draw certain revenues from these villages. In addition they could exact certain forms of labour from the villages and probably enjoyed other privileges as well.

In order to enjoy these rights and privileges the **rakais** disposed of a staff of administrative personnel and probably a kind of office. Such lists are frequently given in the inscriptions. They usually start with a **juru ning kanayakān**, "chief of the **nāyaka** office". It is not clear what precisely the relations were between this chief and the **nāyakas** mentioned earlier, except that they must also have some relation with the collection of the land tax. It is quite possible that the **nāyakas**, though direct subordinates of central government, carried out their duties in the office of the **rakais**. Presumably the land tax collected in this manner would ultimately reach the king and central government, after the different authorities had claimed their dues. We can also infer from several inscriptions that the land tax was paid twice a year in the first month (Caitra) and the seventh (Asuji).[14]

In addition to this **juru ning kanayakān** the office of the **rakai**

included a number of other **juru** or **tuhān**, whose functions cannot always be determined with certainty, such as **juru ning lampuran**, **juru ning wadwā rarai**, **juru ning manapal**, **juru ning kalula** and a **matanḡa** (secretary). The third of these terms, **juru ning manapal** probably indicates a chief of sculptors or mask cutters, while **kalula** probably has no connection with **kula**, "family", but may be derived from Sanskrit **kuḷāla**, "potter". As two of the functions in the list appear to relate to specialized crafts, it is likely that the same applies to some other terms in the list. Thus, the **juru** (or **tuhān**) **ning wadwā rarai**, may have had some authority over juvenile labour (**wadwā** means crowd or group, especially of servants or soldiers; **rarai** means child). As the "chairman" of the list was probably concerned with land revenue it seems likely that the others also controlled some particular kinds of revenue, such as taxes on different kinds of specialized labour: mask cutters, potters, etc. Precisely how this system functioned is not yet clear, but it would seem that the **rakais** and **pamēgats** each controlled the revenue from a particular group of villages, paying most of the proceeds back to the royal treasury but undoubtedly keeping a portion for themselves.

This discussion raises the important question whether the **rakais** and **pamēgats** can be compared with territorial chiefs controlling districts or other geographical units. A close examination of the available evidence shows that this was not the case. In the first place, there was a striking difference in the number of villages controlled by each individual authority. On the one hand, we know of more than fifty names of villages belonging to the **watak Hino**, i.e. controlled by the **Rakai Hino**, whereas only four are known to have belonged to the **watak Kiniwang**.<sup>[15]</sup> If both **Hino** and **Kiniwang** were districts there must have been a vast discrepancy in the size of districts, which seems unlikely. In the second place, we notice that the villages stated to belong to the **watak Hino** were located in different parts of central and/or eastern Java, in fact nearly everywhere: in northern **Kēḡu**, in southern **Kēḡu**, in the **Prambanan** area, in the **Brantas** delta, around **Kēḡiri** and around present **Malang**. The same applies to most of the other frequently mentioned titles, not only those associated with central government, such as **Halu**, **Wēka**, **Tiruan** etc., but also a few others, such as **Pagar Wēsi**, **Pinapan**, **Pangkur Poh**, **Hamēas**, **Pēar** etc.

This dispersion of villages belonging to the same **watak** has led **Stutterheim** to conclude that they constituted no geographically coherent region. The kings would have avoided such a development in order to ensure that the **rakais** and **pamēgats** would never become too powerful.<sup>[16]</sup> If they controlled a region they would be able to organize the peasants to resist central government. In difficult times there must have been periods of agricultural unrest, as this happened in more recent periods. In such cases it would not have been difficult for a regional chief to lead the peasants in rebellion against the centre. By dispersing the villages under the control of the same **rakai** this danger would largely be averted. This does not necessarily imply that this was always the case. The risk would have been negligible for the small **wataks**. Thus we see that the four above-mentioned villages under the control of **Rakai Kiniwang** were all situated in one vicinity.<sup>[17]</sup> Security was probably a much more important consideration for Old Javanese kings than administrative efficiency. From the twelfth century, however, it seems

that the kings had become much more powerful and self-confident, so that they were less reluctant to concentrate more power in the hands of local chiefs. This led to the development of the administrative system of Majapahit, as described in the work by Pigeaud, mentioned in note 22 below.

### 3. Miscellaneous tax collectors

A third kind of intermediary between the centre and the villages were the so-called **mañilala drawya haji**, "those claiming the king's property", in fact heterogeneous lists of people who were all entitled to claim some particular kinds of revenue from all or certain villages. These were not the ordinary taxes but rather miscellaneous kinds of levies. The lists of **mañilala** have caught the attention of many scholars, such as Stutterheim, Goris, Van Naerssen, Buchari and others, but they still raise considerable difficulties of interpretation. Many of the terms mentioned in these lists are wholly or mainly confined to such stereotyped contexts. It is not my intention to continue the discussion of these terms at this stage, as it would involve long digressions into philological and linguistic fields. While referring the reader to still the most basic discussion of this list, [18] I may mention another point, viz. the relation between these tax collectors, or rather tax farmers, and the court. If we examine the lists of **mañilala** in a number of inscriptions it appears that they are nearly always preceded by a trio of royal officials: **pangkur, tawān and tirip**, often called **sang māna katrīṇi**, "the three honoured ones". This trio is already mentioned in one of the earliest inscriptions of central Java viz. the Sanskrit inscription of Kalasan, dated A.D. 778. [19] In that inscription they are designated as the king's **ādeśasāstrins**. Unfortunately this Sanskrit term, unattested in Indian texts or inscriptions, is not quite clear to us; it literally means "those carrying orders as (though they were) knives". In the later Old Javanese inscriptions the stereotyped formula is that the area which is to become a **sīma** is not to be entered by (**tan katamāna de**) the **māna katrīṇi: pangkur, tawān and tirip**, nor by all those "claiming the king's property". Some inscriptions of the time of Pu Siṅḍok have, however, a slightly different formulation, when it is stated that the **sīma** is not to be entered by all those acting by order of (literally: borne by, **winawa**) the **māna katrīṇi**. [20] The latter formulation suggests that this trio controlled to some extent the activities of the tax farmers.

### 4. Religious authorities

I will only comment briefly on the two remaining channels of communication between the court and the villages as they concern less formal relations. Ancient Java in all centuries possessed many institutions of people leading a spiritual life. Besides the individual ascetics, living in hermitages outside the settled areas, there were monks and other clerics living in monasteries, but spending part of their lives wandering through different parts of the island. About the importance and influence of the religious orders and individual ascetics little is known, although they are regularly mentioned in inscriptions with titles such as **punta, ḍapunta, ḍapu, ḍaman, hyang guru, pitāmaha, ḍang ācārya**,

and a few others. Among the highest dignitaries of state there is one who is always given a spiritual title, viz. the Pamègat Tiruan. Thus, in all the inscriptions of Pu Siṅḍok this title was borne by a certain **ḍapunta** Taritip. Another royal official, the (**rakryān**?) Mamrati, in these inscriptions is a certain **hawang** Wicakṣaṇa, in which **hawang**, too, is probably the title of monks of a certain order. Although it is unlikely that such clerics should have wielded an influence comparable with that of, for instance, the Buddhist Saṅgha in Sri Lanka or the priestly families of ancient Cambodia, there are indications that at least some clerics had easy access to the king and other influential authorities, while at the same time having regular contact with various sections of the population. They could therefore easily function as intermediaries. This does not necessarily imply that they actually did so. Whenever they did, however, their influence may have been considerable.

### 5. Direct contacts

Finally there must have been direct contacts between members of the village communities and the court. These were probably of an informal and occasional nature, and this explains why our sources are silent in this respect. There are, however, a small number of instances where village elders directly address one of the highest officials. Thus, in the Palèpangan copper-plate inscription of A.D. 906 during the reign of King Balitung[21] there arose a difference of opinion between the village elders of Palèpangan, perhaps situated in the vicinity of Borobuḍur where the copper-plate was discovered, and a **nāyaka** named Bhagawanta Jyotiṣa. The difference of opinion concerned the amount of tax levied on the ricefields of the village. When the villagers disagreed with the assessment they subsequently addressed a respectful request to the **rakryān mapatih i Hino**, Pu Daḥṣottama Bāhubajrapratipakṣakṣaya, King Balitung's "prime minister" and later successor from A.D. 910. As a consequence of this request the fields were reassessed, with the result that the tax was sharply reduced. As the inscriptions usually go into considerable detail in describing how royal orders descend from the king along the path of hierarchy, we may conclude from the absence of any such formulation in the inscription under consideration that this was not the case; in other words, the contacts must have been of a more direct nature. It is, however, unlikely that this was a regular procedure. On the contrary, it must have been limited to very special cases. Thus, the **nāyaka** in this case was not just a commoner but someone holding the title **Bhagawanta**, reserved for venerable clerics. As to the village elders, they are not just designated by **rāma** in this case, but by **rāmanta**, which is somewhat honorific and seems to have been confined to village elders in villages situated on land controlled by religious foundations. This is probably the reason why direct contact between the village and the court was possible.

Apart from such occasional contacts it is likely that kings regularly visited parts of their realm. The most famous example is, of course, King Hayam Wuruk's tour through a considerable part of eastern Java, as described in the **Nāgarakērtāgama**. [22] During such tours kings not only showed themselves to the people in areas far away from the **kēraton**, but also could come into contact with some members of the

population. In this manner some control on the conduct of the king's representatives was possible. This gave, however, an occasion to members of the population to present petitions to the king. It is impossible to gauge how far such informal contacts constituted an important channel of communication between the court and the villages.

From the above account it may be concluded that the relations between central government and the villages passed along various channels during the period under survey. It seems to me that the system which, at least to some extent, can be reconstructed for the period between c. 875 and 950, despite its complicated nature, showed an excellent balance between the demands of central government and the autonomy of the villages. It is, however, impossible to ascertain how exactly this system was operated. It is therefore quite possible that it was much less satisfactory in practice than it appears to be. This paper will also have shown how much is still uncertain, especially as far as technical terms are concerned. Further research will undoubtedly supplement and modify the conclusions drawn here. This will, I hope, contribute to a more intensive study of Old Javanese society and administration.

## NOTES

1. See Brandes-Krom, *Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden*, 1918, No. LXVIII, front, line 7 (the Ngantang inscription of King Jayabhaya, dated A.D. 1057).
2. *Nāgarakērtāgama*, Canto XL, verse 4d, cf. N.J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 2nd ed., 1931, pp. 316 f.
3. For *wadana* see, for instance, the first charter of Shela Mandi, dated 1394, Plate I *recto*, line 1, where the royal order is addressed to, among others, the *wadanas* and *buyuts*. Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960, Vol. III, p. 175, translated the former by "speakers", which may be "literal" (the meaning of *wadana* in Sanskrit is "mouth"), but I think that the context here, as well as in other texts and inscriptions, leaves no doubt that the term indicates an administrative rank between the king (and central government) and the village headman (*buyut*, see next note).
4. For the meaning of *buyut* see the charter of Walaṅḍit (undated but belonging to the latter half of the fourteenth century) see J.G. de Casparis, *Inscr. van Ned.-Indië*, I, 1940, pp. 50-61, line 1: *rāmārame walaṅḍit . makādi buyut*, "the village elders of Walaṅḍit, in the first place the village headman".
5. This view, which is contradicted by the finds of Chinese ceramics of the Sung and Yuan periods in various parts of Central Java, was generally abandoned until recently, when the discovery of Caṅḍi Sambisari, covered with more than 20 feet of volcanic soil before it was excavated, gave rise to fresh speculation that a disastrous eruption of Gunung Mēraji might have led to an exodus of the population (see Boechari, "Some Considerations on the Problem of the Shift of Mataram's Centre of Government from Central to East Java in the 10th Century", in R.B. Smith and W. Watson, *Early South East Asia*, London, 1979, pp. 473-492). The present author believes that, although such an eruption may have been disastrous in some limited areas of Central Java, it is difficult to imagine that it should have led to a real exodus, except from the areas directly hit by the lava streams, and then only to areas in the neighbourhood, which had been spared.
6. *Anak wanua* or, from the end of the tenth century, *anak thāni* is used for the villagers enjoying full rights in the village assemblies. They were probably regarded as descendants of the original founders of the village concerned.
7. Although *patih* has sometimes been connected with Sanskrit *pati*, "lord, husband etc.", it seems more likely that the word is Austronesian, although its meaning may have been influenced by the Sanskrit word. In this respect I differ in opinion from G. Coedès, *États Hindouisés*, 3rd ed., 1964, note to p. 150.
8. For *wahuta*, which seems to show a non-Austronesian morphemic pattern, I suggested an etymology connecting the word with a Middle-Indian prototype in a paper presented to an Indonesian language conference held in Napoli in April 1982 (in print).
9. For a possible interpretation of *pratyaya* in inscriptions in Old Khmer see G. Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, III, 1951, p. 75 and 168 (cf. also I, 1937, p. 180 and II, 1942, p. 56 and 109), who suggested "homme de confiance, curateur, commis" (the last translation kept "intentionnellement vague"), who further suggested that the term could



9. (continued)  
indicate managers of the property of those who died without heirs. In principle, such property remained under the control of the royal court.
10. This inscription can most easily be consulted in H.B. Sarkar, **Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java**, Vol. II, 1972, pp. 55-59. The translation should, however, be used with caution.
11. The suffix **-nta** (or **-ta** if the word ends in a consonant) can apparently be used in titles in order to indicate some religious connection. Cf. for instance **punta** as a title for monks, as compared with **pu**. All the examples of **rāmanta** known to me apply to **sīmas**.
12. Cf. note 9 above.
13. About the identity of **samēgat** and **sang pamēgat**, there can be no doubt, as the former is never, the latter almost always, preceded by **sang**. In addition, the same persons are denoted by **samēgat** and **sang pamēgat** in different, but contemporary, inscriptions.
14. There seems, however, to have been some variation. Instead of **angkĕn Caitrāsujī**, "every month of Caitra (the first month of the year) and Asujī (the seventh month, corresponding to Asvayuja or Asvina in India)" one also finds **ing satahun satahun**, "every year" without specification of the month (for instance in **Kawi Oork**. XVII, line 3; cf. Sarkar, op. cit., No. LXXXVII).
15. **Kiniwang** occurs in the inscription of **Raṅḍusari I**, dated A.D. 905, published by W.F. Stutterheim in **Inscr. Ned.-Indië**, I, 1940, 1-28. In line 1b3 three villages, viz. **Poh**, **Rumasan** and **Nyū**, the latter two were daughter villages of the first, and again in 2b6-9 two villages, viz. **Wtuan** and **Bungur**, are mentioned as all belonging to the **watak Kiniwang**. All these five villages must have been situated in the same vicinity, for the second and third are daughter villages, the fourth and fifth are adjoining villages (**tpi siring**). Apart from this inscription, villages belonging to the **watak Kiniwang** are rarely mentioned.
16. See W.F. Stutterheim in **Tijdschr. Bat. Gen** 65, 1925, p. 326 ff.
17. See note 15 above.
18. In the article mentioned in note 16 above.
19. F.D.K. Bosch, "De inscriptie van Keloerak", **Tijdschr. Bat. Gen.** 68, 1928, pp. 1-56.
20. See for instance the **Ngantang** inscription of A.D. 1135, **Brandes-Krom, Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden**, No. LXVIII, back, line 13.
21. See note 10 above.
22. Th. Pigeaud, **Java in the Fourteenth Century**, Vol. I and III, Cantos 17-60 (Chapters 4 to 7).

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# 4

## Negara, Mandala, and Despotic State: Images of Early Java

Jan Wisseman Christie

### 1. Introduction: models and trends in the study of early states

The study of the pre-colonial history of Southeast Asia, once the undisputed preserve of Sanskritists and Indian cultural historians, has since the Second World War been taken up by a broader range of scholars, and has, as a consequence, been influenced by the series of debates and intellectual fashions which have enlivened the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. Heine-Geldern's (1942) study of the religious basis of state and kingship in Southeast Asia was succeeded in the 1950's by the influence of the Weberian notion of the patrimonial state. The late fifties and sixties saw an accumulation of economically-oriented studies inspired in turn by Polanyist substantivism, Wittfogel's Hydraulic Society, and Marxian Asiatic Mode of Production. With the seventies came a partial retreat into structuralist and symbolic studies of myth, ritual and hierarchy. Then, as the momentum of structuralism began to dissipate, the influence of the schools political and the more Marxian critical anthropology asserted itself, reviving some of the debates of the sixties. By no means all scholars interested in early Southeast Asia have participated in recent debates. Many, including the majority of those dealing with primary data, have unfortunately held aloof from them.

Groupings which have emerged amongst the participants in recent debates and their followers have their roots in cleavages that began to appear during the 1960's. These debates, however, address only a portion of the assumptions underlying recent work. As a result, apparently opposing models tend to overlap in certain key areas. The influences of Weber and Heine-Geldern have endured, as have some entrenched images of Further India inherited from Coedes and his predecessors. Few of these ideas have been questioned and almost none finally discarded by general agreement. There has been overall a marked preference shown by those of all shades of opinion for static rather than dynamic models. As a result there has been a general tendency to perceive change in the early states of the region as exogenous both in cause and in agent, and a related inclination to focus upon - and perhaps overstress - structural continuities in the societies studied. Endogenous change, particularly in areas of culture and social structure, has often been neither expected nor perceived.

This may be one reason for the enduring appeal of "Indianization" as the prime mover in the study of early state formation in Southeast Asia.

Recent theoretical studies of early Southeast Asian polities have gravitated into two rather diffuse clusters. One, which bases itself largely upon ethnographically-derived models and owes much to the substantivist school of economic anthropology and later structural and symbolic studies, might best be characterized as the "Sociological" school. The other broadly-defined group comprises - despite some political differences - the intellectual followers of Marx and Wittfogel, and may be labelled the "Oriental Despotism" school. This division is not, of course, without problems. Some studies combine elements of both, some use few ideas of either group, and in some areas these very broad schools overlap to a degree. However, the basic division is an important one, reflecting differences not only in general theoretical approach to the problem of early political and social formations, but also differences in underlying assumptions about the societies involved.

Two major theories have been particularly influential in circles of scholars who view early Southeast Asian polities as some form of "Oriental Despotism". These are Marx's notion of the "Asiatic Mode of Production" (AMP), [1] and the related model of the "Hydraulic Society" proposed by Wittfogel in the 1950's. The salient features of the AMP model, different aspects of which have been emphasized by different scholars, [2] are generally as follows: the Asiatic state is by definition an agrarian one, with only rudimentary industrial and commercial sectors within the economy. Normally located in a torrid climatic environment, the state's agrarian base must rely heavily upon public hydraulic works in order to produce state-supporting surpluses. The hydraulic works - an essential component of the means of production - are built, maintained, and controlled by the state, that is, the ruler. The dominating ideological state apparatus is that of religion, which is substituted for law as the prime mechanism for maintaining order and the submission of the populace. The ruler's position is legitimized and justified through his position as central figure in the religion. The combination of state religious authority and state control of irrigation gives rise to state ownership of the land, the primary means of production. In the absence of juridical restraints upon the ruler, and given the state ownership of the land, no security of private property can exist, and therefore no independent wealthy class or hereditary aristocracy can arise. The absence of countervailing economic forces within the society concentrates absolute and despotic power in the hands of a small royal ruling class. The remainder of the populace are held in a state of servile social equality through the manipulation of the religion and the threat posed by the military apparatus controlled by the centralized authority (Anderson 1974:494; Tichelman 1980:18; Krader 1981).

Marx perceived a wide social and political chasm between this absolutist state superstructure and the village communities upon which it rested. The villages are depicted as isolated, cohesive, self-sustaining communities organized into a form a primitive, patriarchal communism. The central elements of the village conception were self-sufficiency in domestic crafts and agriculture, the absence of trade with the external world, and therefore nearly complete isolation and lack of involvement in the affairs of the state superstructure,

aside from the compulsion to pay land rent in kind and provide *corvée* labour upon demand (Anderson 1974:487). Marx saw in this Asiatic village an ideal community, but stated that its isolation was the primary reason for the survival of the despotic state system, and thus for what he, agreeing with Hegel, perceived as the "stationary" character and lack of linear history of Asian societies.

Wittfogel's interpretation of Marx emphasizes the bureaucratic and managerial control by a state whose authority lies in its indispensability for the maintenance of the hydraulic system upon which the livelihood of the agrarian population is supposed to depend. Thus the basis of the ruler's power is his functional necessity and ownership of the hydraulic system rather than ownership of the land or possession of military force alone (ibid: 27). The ruler legitimizes himself through identification with the divine in a state-controlled religious system. The major features of this environmentally-determined state model are very similar to the functionalist version of the AMP originally proposed by Marx (Mandel 1971; Hindess and Hirst 1975:210). The emphasis upon the ruler's divine associations has, in the wake of early discussions of the *devarāja* cult in Cambodia (Coedès and Dupont 1946; Heine-Geldern 1942), led to the assumption that wet-rice economy "Indic" states of Southeast Asia were to some degree "Hydraulic Societies". More recent reassessments of the *devarāja* cult (Mabbett 1969; Kulke 1978; Vickery 1980) have as yet had little general impact upon models.

Benda's (1962) article on the structure of Southeast Asian history welds Wittfogel's conception of "Hydraulic Society" to Heine-Geldern's god-kingship in what has become the classic formulation concerning the nature of those early Southeast Asian states falling within the "Indic" sphere. The states he identifies specifically as rigidly hierarchical, hydraulic and theocratic despotisms of this type are those of early Cambodia and Java (ibid: 122). The most thorough-going recent application of the AMP model to early Southeast Asia is the study of Java produced by Tichelman (1980). His thesis concerning the economic and social development of the island rests upon a conception of the pre-colonial state derived directly from Marx and indirectly from Wittfogel, via Benda (1962). Within this classic Marxian framework, Tichelman judges trade to have been peripheral to the Javanese state, and agrees with van Leur (1955) that a money economy developed only on the fringes of the society (Tichelman 1980:13).

The "Sociological" school has countered the monolithic, despotic image of early Southeast Asian states with an array of related and often overlapping models, some more explicitly "emic" than others. For the sake of brevity, these views will be treated here as variants within a single broad class, although this may do less than justice to some of the ideas presented. For Java and other Indonesian states the most consistent image presented has been that of the *negara*. In applying this word, derived originally from the Sanskrit *negara* meaning "city", rather than a Western word to local polities, authors of this school, the most notable recent proponent of which is Geertz (1980), have hoped to side-step problems of definition of the state in overly-Eurocentric terms.

*Negara* in this model refers to the capital, which is said to be equated with - and give its name to - the realm under its rule. In terms of this model, "the state is typically defined, not by its

perimeter, but by its centre" (Anderson 1972:28; also Moertono 1968:112; Geertz 1980:24). The territory controlled by this centre is always in a state of flux; in the absence of permanent boundaries its limits vary in relation to the quality of "charismatic", "supernatural" power concentrated at the centre in the person and the possessions of the ruler. This power has most frequently been compared with the light of a torch radiating outwards from the centre, "gradually fading into the distance and merging imperceptibly with the ascending Power of a neighboring sovereign" (Anderson 1972:28; also Moertono 1968:112; Tambiah 1976:112; Geertz 1980:18). The ruler draws the state inwards towards the centre; government in the **negara** and its mainland analogues was largely government by attraction rather than by compulsion (Geertz *ibid*: 132). This thesis appears as a corollary to a more fundamental proposition about rulership and polity in "Indic" Southeast Asia: the centripetal pull exercised by the ruler and the radiant, exemplary nature of his rule derive from his association with the divine, signalled by the supernatural power he possesses.

Anderson (1972:34) characterizes the central administrative structure of the **negara** as formally hierarchical, but "in effect, composed of stratified clusters of patron-client relationships", in which the power of the patron-official, although reflected in the size of his circle of clients, is ultimately dependent upon favour from above. Tambiah (1976) describes this type of state in terms of the more geographically descriptive "galactic polity", to which Wolters' (1982) **mandala** is closely related. The "galactic polity" and the **mandala** both bear more than a passing resemblance to the "segmentary state" proposed originally as a descriptive model for African societies (Southall 1953), but which has more recently made its appearance in discussions of both South (Stein 1980) and Southeast Asia (Kulke 1980; Wheatley 1983:305). In this latter model the authority of the centre, outside its own core region, is ritual and symbolic rather than political. No clear distinction is made between internal relations between segments of the state and external relations between states. The **mandala** is thus defined by Wolters (*ibid*: 16-32) as an unstable "circle of kings" in a territory without fixed borders, in which each subjugated unit of the state remained a complete, potentially independent polity with its own centre and court. Also, reflecting the African heritage of the model, the role of royal lineage in legitimizing ritual authority has been emphasized for both early Indian and early Javanese states (Kulke *ibid*).

A number of these strands of thought have been gathered together recently by Geertz (1980), in what is to date the most detailed and ambitious model of the **negara** to be proposed. While this "theatre state" model is specifically applied to nineteenth-century Bali, its usefulness is asserted for the study of other, earlier "Indic" states in Southeast Asia (*ibid*: 3), Java in particular. This vision of early Southeast Asia explicitly excludes not only that of Marx and Wittfogel - the "relentless unfolding of a monolithic 'Oriental Despotism'" (*ibid*) - but also the feudal analogy used by Pigeaud for early Java (*ibid*: 5; see Pigeaud 1960-63). In Geertz's view, the **negara** focused on a centre largely divorced from practical politics, and even from the process of government itself, concerned as it was with the "poetics" rather than the "mechanics" of power (*ibid*: 123). This model moves one step beyond that of the "segmentary state" in stating that the ruler's

hegemony was of a ritual nature even in the core of the state. His client ties were in essence no different from, and often no greater than, those of other members of the elite. The pragmatic maintenance activities of government were handled at the lower, local level in the polity. It was local government which maintained order in the communities, regulated irrigation, and organized popular ritual (ibid: 47). The centre was less a political powerhouse than a paradigm, exemplar, and manifestation of the idea of divine perfection. The classical **negara** was, because of its structure, oriented towards spectacle and ceremony, and the king, because of his role, immobilized by ritual.[3]

The divinity of the **negara's** ruler, unlike that of the Oriental Despot, gave him no more than symbolic ownership of the land and populace (ibid: 128); control of irrigation, and thus of agriculture, does not appear to have been either the organizing principle of this state or the basis of political power within it (ibid: 69). At this point - and in the denial of the state's claim to power based upon a monopoly of force - Geertz's **negara** model breaks most sharply with those associated with the AMP or Hydraulic Society and, according to Geertz, with any other Western ideas about what a state is (ibid: 122). This statecraft-as-a-theatrical-art thesis (ibid: 120) rejects economic struggle as the central dynamic of history in the region, as it rejects the myth of the closed, autarchic, communal village.

The **negara** theory does, however, converge with those of the Oriental Despotism school in two key areas, aside from its emphasis upon religion rather than law as the foundation of the state order. Geertz, basing his discussion of the economics of the "Indic" states largely upon the substantivist arguments about the nature of pre-capitalist trade, has maintained throughout his writings the view that trade was both external and alien to the hierarchic classical states. Although he lists "Sindok's unnamed kingdom in Eastern Java" (ibid:87) amongst the "thalassocratic" bazaar states of the archipelago, he defines its trade in the terms that van Leur borrowed from Gibbon, that is "splendid and trifling" (ibid; 1962:375-6). Geertz and most of the "Sociological" school deny both that trade had any general impact upon the domestic economy, and that there existed in the heartlands of agrarian **negaras** any economically important marketing system (ibid). Essentials in **negaras** were obtained either, as in Oriental Despotisms, by making them oneself, or through traditionally fixed reciprocal exchange relationships and redistributive ceremonies. The other assumption that Geertz and others either implicitly or explicitly share with the adherents of the "Oriental Despotism" school is that "Indic" societies lacked a dynamic linear history before the coming of Islam and the colonial powers. This assumption is, in fact, a necessary precondition for any study based largely upon extrapolative reconstruction of a past society.

## 2. Critique

It might be of benefit, now that several models have been articulated in some detail by more than one school, to begin to test them against the epigraphic and archaeological data available for at least one part of the region. The ninth through thirteenth-century states of Java have been identified, at one time or another, with all variations of the

above models and so provide a particularly appropriate testing ground for them. Moreover, the available archaeological data and epigraphic material are peculiarly rich in information concerning the early village, its internal structure, external horizontal and vertical relations, its role in regional and state economies, and its position within the state. The majority of the inscriptions recovered for this period deal directly with the relations between the state and the village, and indirectly with the structure of the state itself. Although much of the terminology, particularly that dealing with official titles, is as yet poorly understood, enough material is accessible to make such a study feasible. Available archaeological data are sufficient to illuminate not only the geography and religion of the states, but also settlement patterns, subsistence, and trade (Asmar and Bronson 1973; Asmar et.al. 1975; Wisseman 1977a).

Within successive classical Javanese states, or *bhūmis*, the superstructure above the level of the village consisted, throughout the period in question, of two tiers: that of the *rāja* or ruler in the *kraton* and, below him, the *rakais* or heads of *watēks*. The ruler, during this period, was also a *rakai* and maintained direct rights over his *watēk* even after he has ascended the paramount throne. He was normally drawn from amongst the small group of *rakais* holding rights over very large *watēks*, or groups of villages from which tax income could be drawn. The original, major *watēks* appear to have evolved out of the old independent chiefdoms and minor states from which the first major Javanese state was assembled, apparently early in the eighth century. With a few exceptions, subsequent generations of rulers appear to have been attached to those old *watēks* in Central Java which formed the core of the original state. Even during the Majapahit period, long after the titles had lost their original territorial connotations, the major heirs to the throne held these titles. How succession operated during the earlier ninth through thirteenth centuries is not clear, but status as a *rakai* was apparently a necessary prerequisite. Minor *watēks* and *rakai*-ships, of which there were a great many, may have been later creations, the result of divisions of old *watēks* or the expansion of settled territory. Status of all *rakais* cannot, thus, have been equal. In A.D. 862 the major *watēk* of Halu was still only three generations removed from the period when it had been an independent minor state with its own *ratu*, that is, chief or king.[4] This ruler would thus have had the same theoretical status as that of Sanjaya, the early eighth-century ruler who was credited by succeeding kings with founding the Central Javanese state. He was still referred to in a tenth-century king list as *ratu*, although his successors assumed the title of *mahārāja*. [5] Also, the ninth-century *watēk* of Walaing was almost certainly the remnant of the state known to the Chinese in the seventh and eighth centuries as Ho-ling (Damais 1964).

Once a small polity had been absorbed, although it may have maintained some degree of administrative integrity for a time, an irreversible process of absorption and territorial erosion appears to have begun. During the closing centuries of the first millennium the heads of these once independent political units were increasingly drawn into the bureaucracy and status system of the state. *Watēk* holdings became more and more dispersed. By the mid ninth century it was unusual for a settlement belonging to a *watēk* to be contiguous to any other settlement of the same *watēk*, a situation foreshadowing that



in Central Java during the eighteenth century when official apnanage holdings were even more widely scattered (Moertono 1968:118). More concentrated *watèks* appear to have existed for a time in some peripheral regions of the state, as in East Java before the displacement of the *kraton* to the east. But the epigraphic record fails to give any evidence for this after the tenth century. This increasing dispersal of *watèk* holdings appears to have been, at least in part, a deliberate policy of successive Javanese rulers. However, complicated marriage settlements, in a society whose patterns of inheritance were bilateral and did not necessarily favour either the first born or male descendants, almost certainly played a major role in the fragmentation process. Since the rights that a *rakai* held over a *watèk* appear by the ninth century to have been limited to certain standard tax and corvée rights, this fragmentation of holdings appears not to have affected in any profound way the structure or populations of the villages. At the same time, villages clearly maintained close economic and ritual links with their neighbours, ties which were both fundamental to regional economic systems and which regularly crosscut *watèk* tax-collecting boundaries. By the ninth century the Javanese state was neither an unstable *maṅḍala* or "circle of kings", nor a segmentary state composed of detachable, cohesive sub-units.

The ruler, like his fellow *rakais*, had direct tax and corvée rights over villages in his own *watèk*. However, his sources of income were not limited to those he derived from his status as a *rakai*. He had a number of additional taxing rights, the most important being his right to pay for services by assigning limited taxing rights in lieu of payment. Recipients of these rights, who were known as the *mangilala drwya haji*, "collectors of the king's due", included provisioners of the royal households, artisans, magicians, medical practitioners, actors, musicians, and dancers, as well as both foreign and local traders, a relatively large but apparently somewhat loosely-structured civil service and a small professional army or palace guard. This tax-collecting right of the king was far from negligible in its impact upon the economic power wielded by the throne. No mere *rakai*, no matter how large his *watèk* income, could command comparable resources. Yet the ruler was clearly not the only figure within the administration to possess an independently collected income through inherited rights. The state, while not easily dismantled, was clearly not monolithic. Although there was clearly continuity of sorts between the states of the late first and early second millennium centred first in Central and then in East Java, the history of the region does not present us with an uninterrupted line of powerful monarchs of a single tightly defined dynasty, nor do we possess evidence for the existence of a rigidly structured and unitary chain of command which tied the apex of the structure to its base. Status was undoubtedly important, and grew increasingly so, even at the village level, after the turn of the millennium, but, while status did not necessarily serve power, neither did power, as in Geertz's *negara*, merely serve to enhance status. The early Javanese were clearly interested in status, but apparently not obsessed by it.

The religious establishment of the state, which at the upper levels was influenced by both Hinduism and Buddhism, was not the sole domain of the ruler, nor did the living king appear to be the focus of any cult. The major temples and monasteries were funded largely through the

establishment of *sīma*, or tax-exempt, territories, in which rights to taxes (but not to title of the land itself) were ceded either by a *rakai* or the ruler to a specific religious community attached to a specific temple. These funds were not transferable by that community. The ruler had no power to remove tax rights from his fellow *rakais*, but did evidently encourage their generosity to religious groups by agreeing to relinquish all or part of his supplementary taxing rights in the *sīma* territories. *Sīma* grants were in theory made in perpetuity, and were not rescindable by either ruler or *rakai*. Several instances are known from the epigraphic record of court cases in which *sīma* rights, some of them several centuries old and granted by then defunct ruling families, were upheld by the courts. Under Majapahit rule a major reissuing of *sīma* documents occurred, as the older documents became unreadable. In the one case in which both the older stone charter and the Majapahit copper-plate replacement have survived, it appears that no attempt was made to change or downgrade the rights granted. Successive rulers were associated in some manner with all religious endowments, but they were not by any means the only supporters of the religion, nor were they legally entitled to rescind grants made either by others or themselves. It must be emphasized, also, that no *sīma* grants, as such, involved gifts of land. If actual title to land was to be transferred to a religious foundation, then that land was first purchased, for gold, from the villagers affected. Neither the ruler nor the *rakai* derived proprietary rights over most of the village lands from their position (Caspary 1981:128-30). Thus the common translation of *sīma* as "freehold" is both wrong and seriously misleading. The Javanese ruler did not base his right to collect taxes on any right of ownership of the land, and therefore cannot be qualified in this sense as an "Oriental Despot". Even the ruler's tax rights were subject to social restraints. A village which felt itself to be unfairly burdened had the right to appeal and attempt to renegotiate its payments. Several Javanese and Balinese inscriptions record such village-state negotiations and reassessments.

Royal authority in "Indic" states has been explained almost entirely in terms of religion by all of the models proposed to date. For the "Sociological" school the exemplary court was a paradigm to be copied, since it represented itself as a copy of a divine order to which the ruler, through his divine connections, had unique access. Both the "Sociological" and "Oriental Despotism" schools have tended to accept some degree of divine kingship as part of their models, the latter school tending to emphasize the ruler's cynical manipulation of the state religious ideology. The early Javanese polities might, at first glance, seem to have centred upon such a god-king. However, allusions to living kings as gods, which were not in any event common before the reign of Airlangga in the eleventh century, may have been little more than the flattering hyperbole that one expects from dependent court literati. Similar allusions can even be found in the literature of medieval Europe. Divine ancestors were undoubtedly important, and the seemingly Hindu and Buddhist temples of both Central and East Java housed the ashes of dead kings. The *sīma* charters associated with these structures leave no doubt that they were viewed above all as ancestor temples. However, the ruler had no monopoly over ancestors. Indeed, an increasing range of elite groups founded their own family temples after the move of the centre to East Java, and villagers persisted in

honouring their village ancestors. Royal connection with the divine, although perhaps the strongest, was, as noted above, by no means unique. Nor can the assumption of the title of *bhaṭāra*, or god, by living kings after the twelfth century be taken as evidence of true royal divinity. This title was not assumed by Javanese kings until well into the period of the vulgarization of the Hinduized apotheosis of ancestors, and it appears to have been no more meaningful than the Khmer use of the term *deva* (god) as a non-royal title. The Javanese ruler, in his assumption of divine connection, differed from his subjects only in a matter of degree.

While living Javanese kings were not the objects of cults, they were active participants in religious practices focusing upon asceticism as a means of accumulating *sakti*, or spiritual power. Royal ascetic observances were first alluded to in the tenth century, and acquired thereafter an increasingly tantric flavour, particularly those associated with mountain and water-source sacred places, which became increasingly prominent after the turn of the millennium. But none of these royal religious activities or ties qualify the early Javanese kings as god-kings, and the royalty-dominated religion of the Oriental Despot did not arise in Java.

Genealogy alone also fails to explain the Javanese ruler's power. No Javanese king committed his genealogy to stone in the manner of those in Cambodia, or mentioned in his inscriptions, by way of affirming his legitimacy, his relationship with his predecessors. Balitung's list of former kings - the only one on record - makes no overt claim to direct descent or blood relationship. This weakens the case for the pure segmentary state reconstruction of early Java. Not only was there apparently no clear dividing line between the family of the ruler and those of the *rakais*, but there appears to have been a proliferation of upwardly-mobile wealthy families of lesser status after the turn of the millennium (Christie 1983:27-8). In this respect the Javanese states fit more closely the predictions of the *negara* than the "Oriental Despotism" model. Hereditary aristocracy may have lost some independence during the Majapahit period, but this class was never completely absorbed into the royal lineage. Concentrations of wealth in non-royal hands, furthermore, not only persisted but apparently increased within a widening circle. As the number of wealthy families lacking hereditary *waték* holdings grew, particularly in East Java, pressure seems to have been put upon rulers to create a new class of *sīma* grant: the investment *sīma*. There is some evidence that a number of wealthy families had begun to buy land, build family temples connected with the establishment religion, and then apply - in return for a lump sum payment - to have their land declared free of taxes in perpetuity. In these cases the ruler tended to retain a portion of his supplementary tax rights and divide the remainder between the temple itself and the family holding the grant, thus creating a family trust which benefited future generations financially, but perhaps more importantly, in some ways mimicked the holdings of the *rakais*. This undoubtedly enhanced the status of the *sīma*-holding lineage as much as the possession of a family ancestor temple did. Status rivalry may also explain the curious inflation in a broad range of official titles during the later East Javanese period, culminating in the royal assumption of the title of *bhaṭāra*. The evidence seems to point to a much greater degree of social

fluidity in early Javanese states than past images of rigidly hierarchical social systems predict.

Both the segmentary and theatre state models may have over-emphasized the ritual aspects of the ruler's position and, in common with other models of this school, may have underestimated the strength of the ruler's political power outside of the core of the state. While the early Javanese rulers clearly lacked monopolies either of force or of economic power within their states, and despite the fact that they had to contend with the disadvantages of relatively uncentralized administrative and financial structures, their efforts to unify their states appear, judging from the archaeological record, to have been on the whole successful.<sup>[6]</sup> The whole of Java was never under one rule during this period, but while Javanese states were never coextensive with the island, and those that coexisted seem never to have been perfectly centralized, neither was power as dispersed at all times as Naerssen's (1976:298) "polykraton" model would seem to suggest. Furthermore, periods for which there is no recovered epigraphic record cannot be assumed to have been periods of dissolution of the state or of extreme weakness of the centre. The twelfth-century East Javanese state of Janggala has left no permanent records, but Chinese reports of the period indicate that Janggala was considered to be one of China's wealthiest and most favoured trading partners (Wheatley 1961:63). Any structural resemblance that the very early Javanese polities bore to segmentary states of the African (or the mooted South Indian) type appears to have been transitory. Some centralized states, while in the process of formation, may be expected to exhibit at an early stage characteristics similar to those of true segmentary polities (Stein 1980:274), and this may have been true of these earliest Javanese states. There is, however, no reason to believe that a stable segmentary system was formed either in Central or in East Java, or that the polities ever reverted to such a state in later times of weakness. The process of conversion of the *watêks* from concentrated territories (in the case of those which actually began as such) into dispersed tax holdings was not, apparently, reversible even at an early stage in the process.

The *negara* model ties the king's supposed divineness to the radiant, exemplary quality of his role in the state, and explains the geography of the state in terms of this radiance. While there may be some question about the degree to which the living ruler was considered to be "divine", it is true that in Java during the latter part of the period under discussion increasing emphasis was put upon the public, visible aspects of the king's glory, generosity, and concern for the welfare of his people. Royal panegyrics, absent on the whole from the earlier *sīma* documents from Central Java, began to consume more and more space in the charters of Airlangga and his successors. Airlangga himself is described (presumably at his direction) as acting as an "umbrella over the *maṇḍala* (the circle or totality) of the island of Java". These assertions, and the later division of the Majapahit state into core and peripheral regions give some support to the radiant state as the ideal geography of the classical Javanese states.

However, it was not over the totality of the island of Java that Airlangga and his successors ever claimed any *real* power. It was a much more restricted and well-defined region which bore the name of the kingdom, be it *bhūmi* Mataram, Kadiri, or other. These *bhūmis* or "lands"

were spoken of separately from the larger area bearing the name of **yawadwipamaṇḍala**. Within the former the kings seem to have exercised some degree of effective administrative power. It was within these regions that **sīma** grants were made and taxes collected on a regular basis. The importance of the **bhūmi** in Java is reflected in changes occurring in demographic patterns in marginal regions. The north coast district of Rembang was initially peripheral to both the Central and East Javanese core regions. However, in the course of the eleventh century a **sīma** grant was made on the western border of the present district, indicating an extension of real administrative power into the area from the east. Within a century of this expansion of the **kraton's** direct rule into the Rembang region the number of settlements appears, on the basis of present data, to have quadrupled, and the population and wealth of the region seem to have increased. The economic integration of this area was also of a high order from this period onwards (Asmar et.al. 1975:110-111; Wisseman 1977a:13-14). Whatever the relationship between the centre and the periphery, within the **bhūmi** itself the government seems to have been reasonably effective in maintaining the prosperity and stability, if not total unity, of the areas under its control. However, the **bhūmi** and the **kraton** centre do not appear to have borne the same name during the pre-Majapahit period. This unity was a feature of coastal states of the maritime region more than of their agrarian neighbours. The term **negara** is also more appropriately applied to the coastal states of this period. This term, which may reflect a more capital-focused image of the state, was not used, either in pre-Majapahit or in Majapahit Java to denote the state as well as the capital. The definition given in a Majapahit period text makes it clear that it was normally used to mean "town", and was applied to any quasi-urban centre (Pigeaud 1960-63: III, 121), royal or not.

Given the general lack of large concentrations of population or strongly centralized administrations, the degree of stability and integration which these early Javanese states managed to achieve, at times in areas far from the centre, is remarkable. This does not appear to have been brought about through the maintenance of a large standing army, as posited by "Oriental Despotism" models; no mentions are made of military garrisons away from the capital. Moreover, most officials within the villages seem to have been of local extraction and to have been paid by the village rather than the state. As noted above, at least some of the intermediate-level official positions appear to have developed out of formerly independent political units. Within this rather unpromising framework the kings of Java managed to rule states which the Chinese imperial court considered to be of first rank status (Wolters 1958:605; Coedes 1968:180), and which were used as models of power and wealth by the rulers of Angkor (Coedes 1942-66: I, 43).

The early Javanese states, although not so centralized and monolithic as the Oriental Despotism model contends, appear, on the other hand, to have been rather less fissiparous and easily fragmented (or segmented) than many of the "Sociological" school models predict. The state itself - the **bhūmi** rather than the **maṇḍala** - appears to have been relatively stable and well integrated, both politically and economically. Although the **maṇḍala** of the island of Java is alluded to in a standard formula appearing in inscriptions after the early eleventh century, it is not mentioned elsewhere. Its exact meaning in

this context is also unclear. It may refer to the state's circle of neighbouring polities. However, given the general political solipsism of the *sīma* charters, it is more likely that the term refers merely to the island as a geographical unit. Very little mention is ever made in Javanese inscriptions of neighbouring polities, although the destruction of the East Javanese court by a neighbouring *haji* (petty ruler) in the early eleventh century certainly indicates that some existed which were not recorded by history. The history of the early states and the subject matter of the courtly *kidung* and *kakawin* literature leave the impression that Javanese kings were aware of - and treated - each other, often on equal terms. The courtly literature does not present images of royal *cakravartins* with expanding empires, but deals rather with endless battles, intrigues and alliances with neighbours of equal status. Whether these stories borrowed from the Indian tradition reflected real political conditions in Java at the time is not clear; they were, however, popular there. Support can be found in the written and archaeological records both for the existence of stable, cohesive states and for the fact that they coexisted with others. The nature of these relationships, however, remains obscure.

The image of the traditional Javanese village as a self-contained, self-sufficient, and isolated unit "living in harmony and mutual assistance against the background of communal solidarity" (Breman 1982:194) has only recently been seriously questioned. Most reconstructions of the early state in Java have implicitly, if not explicitly, accepted this closed village world as axiomatic. The accuracy of the colonial records from which this image has been derived is now queried by both Geertz (1980; but see Nordholt 1981) and Breman (1982), who counterpose a far less unitary and idyllic picture of early village society. Breman (*ibid*: 201) goes so far as to claim that "the village as a collective unity did not antedate colonial rule". He and Geertz are agreed that the patron-client relationships and taxing rights of the pre-colonial states crosscut settlement boundaries, dealing with households, and even individuals, rather than with villages as units. This casts doubt upon the image of the pre-colonial village as an effective corporate body. For both Breman and Geertz, the peasantry were segmented into "vertical, non-territorially determined blocks of patrons and their clients" (Breman *ibid*: 221) rather than into horizontal, territorial village communities.

This approach questions the assumptions made by both the "Oriental Despotism" school and the earlier members of the "Sociological" school. What they have in common, however, with their opponents and predecessors is the assumption that the system only changed with the advent of colonial rule. They have, in effect, countered one image of Asian timelessness with another in assuming that what obtained on the eve of European-inspired change must also have obtained throughout the centuries before. This vision of late pre-colonial fragmentation of villages and complexities of vertical relationships may well be accurate, at least in some places. But judging from the epigraphic record, it does not appear to reflect the situation in pre-Majapahit Java. The inscriptions of the ninth through thirteenth century depict the village not only as a corporate body, but also as that with which higher levels of government dealt in matters of tax and local government. Agricultural taxes during this period were assessed upon the village as a whole.

From early Javanese *sīma*, or tax transfer, documents it appears that by the ninth century Central and East Javanese villages, although represented as the basal units in a larger stratified society, were themselves internally stratified.[7]. The governing body consisted of a council of villagers - the *karāmān* - whose membership was large, running at times into the hundreds. The *karāmān* group, which was itself subdivided, appears to have comprised all core or full-membership, adult, married villagers, their status probably dependent upon a combination of land rights and position as head of household, as in Bali in the same period. No clear village headman emerges from amongst the numerous office-holding *karāmān* listed in the early charters, although this may have changed by the end of the Majapahit period. Most of the village office titles listed in the ninth-century inscriptions were indigenous and some already archaic, suggesting a developed and integrated - although not necessarily static - social structure of long standing within the community. Representatives of the tax-collecting interests of the state or *watĕk* appear to have held no position within the village; although they were counted as residents they were not members of the *karāmān*, they were not consulted in land transactions, and were regularly excluded (in their official capacities) from *sīma* territories. Aside from the *karāmān* and external officials the village citizenry were composed, in unknown proportions, of other *anak wanua*: residents of unclear status, including artisans and traders, and the *raray*, junior or subordinate members, including, presumably, children, landless tenants, servants, and others lacking full *karāmān* rights. Slavery was apparently known, at least in East Java, and some village members had slaves or servants within their households. While some of these may have been debtors or contractual servants, the number of people carried off in slave raids from the north coast of Bali indicates that a regular slave market may have existed in East Java by early in the second millennium, if not before.[8]

The village community was identified with a specifically bounded tract of land which seems not to have been limited merely to the land under cultivation by its members (Christie 1982:87-92, 137-42). Both the structure of land tenure and patterns of agricultural activity within the village were complex, reflecting the existence of several sorts of complementary cultivation systems, including shifting agriculture. There is no evidence, however, that any of this land was actually worked communally. Individual ownership of land within the village was apparently the norm in respect to *sawah* (wet rice land), house land, and orchards. *Sawah* cultivation formed the backbone of the economy of the state. It produced the greatest tax revenues and was the subject of most *sīma* documents. House land, judging by its high value,[9] seems to have contributed as much to the household's diet as it does in modern Java, and much the same seems to have been true of orchards. The only land handled by the *karāmān* without reference to individual owners comprised various classes of swidden land, fallowed swidden land, and a variety of uncultivated zones within the village boundaries. Thus the economically most important land in the state appears to have been held in effective ownership not by the village corporation or by the state, but by the individual farmer or his nuclear household, although land transactions were subject to approval from the *karāmān*.

Not only were some classes of land held by families or individuals within the villages, but all classes of land mentioned were apparently alienable, subject to approval by the village council. There is some evidence that in East Java by the eleventh or twelfth century more than one type of land sale was possible, and that the rather complex structure of regulations governing land transactions of more recent centuries had already begun to form. Land sales to individuals outside of the village - most apparently wealthy, but not members of the *rakai* class - are recorded in a number of inscriptions. Prices of land in such cases were always listed in units of gold and silver, as were the taxes assessed upon villages. There appears, thus, to have been some market not only for rice, but also for land within the early states, and the basic terminology for sale and purchase of land (*dwal* and *wli*) was that used to refer to the buying and selling of commodities in the village market.[10] It appears, on the basis of the archaeological evidence, that the named units of gold and silver mentioned in land sales corresponded to a form of coinage. The economies of early Javanese states thus appear to have been at least partially monetized, and the concept of land ownership appears to have been rather sophisticated.

The Javanese epigraphic material would therefore seem to confirm Geertz's contention that villages within classical states were not idyllic, primitive communes. Javanese villages were clearly stratified in their membership, distinctions between "core" villagers and other groups of lesser status having appeared before the period of the first *sima* charters. The village elites were not the small, restricted groups of local landlords that Breman (1982) recognizes in eighteenth-century Java. On the other hand, the ninth-century villages were not collectivist in nature; there is no evidence that they maintained communal granaries or that they had communally-farmed fields. Nor did they feed non-farming but productive members of the community through the kind of redistributive system identified by Hegel and Marx as the hallmark of the traditional Asian village (Anderson 1974:479). *Sawah*, house land, and orchards were individually owned and alienable, and differential access to productive land was evidently reflected in status within the village.

The technical management of village agriculture in early Java conforms more to the predictions of the *negara* model than those of "Oriental Despotism". Although *sawah*, the irrigated rice field, appears to have been by far the most economically important agricultural land in early Javanese states, there is no evidence for the involvement of any supra-village agency in irrigation on a regular basis. Only a very small number of inscriptions, all apparently from East Java, deal with water control projects (Wisseman 1981; Christie 1982:492-5), and of these only one[11] is said to have been undertaken at the king's behest and to have involved the use of corvée labour. This particular dam is stated to have been built under extraordinary circumstances occasioned by the disastrous change in the course of a branch of the Brantas river. The low royal profile in respect to water management, evident from the epigraphic material, tends to contradict the assumptions made by Meer (1979:22-3) about the importance of the role of the king in irrigation. The ruler in early Javanese states seems rarely to have been involved in water control projects, which were almost certainly undertaken and maintained at the local level. This brings into question Naerssen's



(1977:27, 56-7) hypothesis that the emergence of a supra-village elite, and eventually the king, was the result of problems posed by the necessity of organizing people to deal with irrigation (the same functional argument that is used by Wittfogel). The fact that the above-mentioned dam, once built, was consigned to the care of a nearby religious foundation, which was compensated for its trouble with a *sīma* endowment, would seem to confirm the absence of any regular central governmental apparatus for dealing with water management. At the same time, village official lists regularly include irrigation officials, drawn always from the ranks of the *karāmān*. Irrigation appears to have been, on the whole, an intra-village affair. The fact that no equivalent of the Balinese *subak*, or inter-village irrigation society, appears to have existed was almost certainly due to differences in physical and political geography between Java and Bali.

Early Javanese villages seem not only to have handled their own irrigation, but also most of their own judicial affairs. A few legal matters appear to have reached higher courts, but those recorded arose from inter-village disputes or differences over taxes owed to the state. Balinese records of the same period, by contrast, indicate that there was a much more direct relationship between the individual villager and the state on that island, possibly due to the very much smaller size of the states there. In the larger, more administratively complex states of early Java, the villages appear to have been responsible both for the maintenance of local law and order and for internal tax collection from its members. Taxes on agricultural produce were assessed upon the village *karāmān* as a body, rather than upon the individual as in Bali. Taxes upon non-agricultural activities - fishing, hunting, manufacturing and trade - were, however, assessed directly upon the individuals or groups concerned.

What emerges clearly from the epigraphic record of pre-Majapahit Java is the picture of a series of similar but not identical states, none of which at any point resembled the Hydraulic Society proposed by Wittfogel. The states were at once too sophisticated and too administratively fragmented to fit the model of an "Oriental Despotism". State power did not rest upon control of water, nor is there any reason to believe that irrigation provided the impetus for the formation of these early states. Some form of individual ownership of land appears to have been both widespread and common to all strata, with the bulk of the productive land held by the villagers who worked it. Neither the ruler nor any other member of the elite appears to have held rights over village land itself. Their rights were restricted to labour and its produce. Thus early Javanese rulers did not - at least in the period under discussion - control the means of production. Since these remained at this time in the hands of the village-cultivators, early Java's mode of production cannot be classed as "Asiatic". Yet the early villages of East and Central Java appear to have been more cohesive and fundamental social, political, and economic units than is suggested by recent studies emerging from within the "Sociological" school. If these reconstructions of late pre-colonial states are valid, then change between the ninth and the eighteenth centuries must have been far more marked than is predicted by any of the models.

However cohesive and administratively important the early Javanese villages were, however, they were not, by the ninth century, closed, self-sufficient units. Productive activity which occurred within them

cannot be separated from that of the state as a whole. There is neither epigraphic nor archaeological evidence to support the assumption made both by the "Oriental Despotism" school and by many within the "Sociological" school that early Javanese villages remained in a state of economic isolation, producing for themselves all items that they could not obtain via ritualized reciprocal or redistributive ties. Tichelman's (1980:19) contention that there was "very little latitude in the village sphere for the development of direct and dynamic relationships between individual producer and market" is contradicted by the way in which *sīma* documents deal with trade. Markets and trade are mentioned frequently in *sīma* charters as important sources of tax revenue. The inscriptions - particularly those from East Java of the tenth century and later - often contain long and apparently relatively comprehensive lists of standard types of manufacturers, traders, and trade goods to be found in village markets. The greater attention paid to trade in East Javanese inscriptions may be due to a shift in the manner of assessment and disposition of *sīma* revenues rather than to any shift in the operation of local commercial activities late in the first millennium A.D., but this is not certain. At least some rulers of the early East Javanese period seem to have had a greater direct interest in commerce, both internal and external, than did their Central Javanese predecessors, so it is possible that important changes in the structure of the economies of states were underway towards the end of the first millennium.

The term most frequently applied to markets of this period is not the possibly foreign term *pasar* remarked upon by students of modern Java, but the indigenous term, *pkān*, which was applied not only to the market, but also to the open space in which it was held and to the five-day market week which is still current in rural Java (Wojowasito and Mills 1980:335). These early Javanese periodic markets evidently circulated amongst groups of neighbouring villages, crossing the administrative boundaries of *watēks*. Although it is by no means certain that all villages were stations for circulating markets, the lack of a market, or market space, appears by the tenth century to have been worthy of note.[12]

The impression given, by the epigraphic material of East Java in particular, of the importance of inter-village economic ties is supported by the little archaeological data available at present. A survey of local pottery found at a number of temple sites in Central Java, including both excavated and surface-collected material, indicates that by the late eighth century products of at least two and probably three regional pottery-making centres circulated throughout the region between Prambanan and Magelang. The two major fabric groups appear to have been contemporary with each other and are found in association with late T'ang Chinese stonewares of types found elsewhere in dated contexts. A similar situation appears to have obtained on the north coast around Rembang during the same period (Wissemann 1977a:12), involving pottery imitating that of the central plains area. The coastal area of that time evidently supported not only a regional trade network of its own, but also maintained ties with the central plains networks. This northern region seems to have had, throughout this and subsequent periods, patterns of regional pottery trade similar to those of the interior, the area of distribution apparently increasing with the extension of effective political control of the region by the East

Javanese **kraton**. This process was apparently accompanied by increasing penetration of the regional network by foreign imports (Asmar et.al. 1975:111-12d; Wisseman 1977a:13; Orsoy de Flines 1941-7:66-84).

If such heavy, fragile, and relatively low-value items as earthen ware pots were traded over such wide areas, it seems likely that more valuable and portable items - metals, cloth, dye stuffs - reached an even wider market. As with the earthenware, trade in these items must have been multi-centred. No single source of any of these items is indicated by either the epigraphic or the archaeological data. On the contrary, the pattern of distribution identifiable from the archaeological data available is consistent with the impression created by the inscriptions (and by later historical and ethnographic material) of a rather diffuse, many-centred, though relatively well-integrated system of local trade which may, however, have grown more intense and concentrated in regions nearer to the coasts during the East Javanese period.

On the basis of the archaeological data alone the assumption that Javanese marketing was confined to isolated and small circuits or sporadic occurrences before the fourteenth century (Geertz 1962 (1967): 375-6) is untenable. It is interesting to note that the distribution system, as early as the eighth century, handled not only local but also imported wares, although these latter were far rarer and presumably far more valuable. All of the sites in Central Java which have been investigated to date are associated with religious foundations of the eighth and ninth centuries, so it is possible that the foreign ceramics reached them through non-market channels. The sites in Rembang and neighbouring districts near the north coast, however, represent a broader cross-section of the early settlements of the region. While little can be proved by the distribution of the few T'ang ceramics so far found in the region, which have not yet been found at sites away from the coast, Chinese ceramics of the tenth or eleventh century and later are far more widely distributed. Over twenty sites in Rembang district alone have produced Sung dynasty Chinese ceramics (Orsoy de Flines 1941-47:70; Asmar et.al. 1975: Table IX.iii), and while Orsoy de Flines' datings on the ceramics appear to have been consistently early, there is no doubt that Sung ceramics were located at over a hundred sites in the neighbouring districts of Semarang, Grobogan, Demak, Japara, Pati, Kudus and Blora (Orsoy de Flines *ibid*).

The pottery-making centres of the Rembang region appear to have been profoundly affected by Chinese styles, as well possibly as by techniques of manufacture, by the tenth or eleventh century. By this time pottery was no longer made by the older paddle and anvil technique which allowed the use of complex body forms (Wisseman 1977a:13). The pottery of the early second millennium in the area was made in simpler body shapes of the kind which can be wheel-thrown. While it is not clear from surface studies whether this pottery was genuinely wheel-thrown rather than hand-built and finished on a slow wheel, it is apparent that at the very least a stylistic revolution had taken place in local potting under the influence of imported wares. This stylistic change must indicate some change in consumer tastes, which in turn may indicate increased exposure of a broader market to foreign imports.[13] However this circulation of imported ceramics was achieved, it is clear that local pottery was traded through the periodic markets, and that regional networks were sufficiently well developed to ensure the distribution of pottery made by competing

centres throughout large regions. In the case of the lowlands of Central Java, this region apparently encompassed the entire core area of the state. Some of the finer unglazed earthenwares have been tentatively ascribed to foreign sources, and local manufacturers of such fine wares as *kendis* may have competed with foreign wares of similar types in the markets. While the distribution of pottery at known sites does not provide a ready answer to the problem of the nature of the marketing system which handled it, it almost certainly rules out the possibility that the marketing ties took the form of a primitive system of customary monopolies as suggested by Wolf (1966:40). Not only were the wares traded too widely for them to have been limited by such a relatively closed system, but also, while pottery-making centres clearly specialized in the production of consumer goods, these goods were the produce of a class of professionals competing with other, both local and perhaps foreign, professionals. Their responsiveness to changing tastes or technology also argues against the possibility that they were hereditary part-time monopolists.

The archaeological data indicate that the village markets were neither isolated nor self-sufficient. The epigraphic sources make it clear that the vendors frequenting these markets included not only local farmers and village-based producers who probably farmed as well, but also several classes of circulating professional traders, producer-vendors, and transporters, all falling under the general rubric of *masamwyawahāra*, "those who carry on commercial activities" (Wisseman 1977b). These two groups, professional and non-professional, are treated separately, and in most cases differently, in the tax-assignment portions of *sīma* charters. While *sīma* holders in the East Javanese period normally received control over at least a portion of the taxes and levies on the non-professional, village-bound group, special provisions were made for the *masamwyawahāra* (Christie 1982:164-6, 173-4). A number of these professional vendors were normally freed from all royal tax obligations on a specified volume of trade; those exceeding the limits came under the tax authority of the state's tax collectors. Those vendors who were freed of state taxes, however, were freed of state tax obligations not only when trading within the *sīma* territory, but also in all other districts which they might visit for trade. The formula stating that traders

... are not to be subject to the *sang mangilala dꦫꦮꦶꦲ* haji  
tax collectors no matter what region they may go to ...[14]

is common to most charters which discuss trade in detail. One charter states the case more explicitly, affirming the right of certain traders to trade free of tax

... should they trade to the limits of his majesty's  
kingdom ...[15]

Although the early Javanese markets were undoubtedly more limited in scope and flexibility than their modern counterparts, they apparently served not only the consumption needs, but also some of the storage and credit needs of the farmers. The professional rice vendor appears to have been a standard feature in the market circuits of East Java, and his presence may be linked to the apparently active rice export trade of the Brantas delta ports.[16] This marketing system bears no resemblance to the system of closed units dependent upon ritualized reciprocity

posited by substantivists and AMP adherents alike.

The early village's links with the region and the state were not merely those of trade and tax. Although ranked groups were recognized within the village, the epithets preceding individual names in inscriptions were in most cases the same. The most common epithet, **si**, appears to have been applied to village members in general, but was not usually given to members of the state hierarchy above the village level, except for a few at the lowest levels of the bureaucracy. Individuals bearing the higher rank epithets of **sang**, **pu**, **ra**, and **dyah**, among others, seem rarely to have been integral members of the village community, although **sang** was occasionally used in place of **si** for whole village communities. The epithet **si** seems to have been associated with status within the state rather than within the village. Epithets normally used within villages, but not outside them, were kinship terms, in which both status and seniority appear to have been expressed, although in such a manner as to indicate that status within the village was dependent upon more than seniority alone. The early Javanese villages, although far from closed and isolated social worlds, were not so completely integrated into the state as to have lost internal coherence. They were far more than arbitrary or accidental geographic divisions of a uniform and consolidated state social hierarchy. At the same time, lines of communication between the villages and the states' political and cultural centres seem to have been well developed by the latter part of the first millennium A.D., judging from the relatively high degree of cultural uniformity and the evidence, provided by the large number of Sanskrit names borne by villagers, for familiarity with at least some aspects of the **kraton** culture. Much of this information and a certain amount of ideology may have been disseminated through the medium of the **wayang**, some form of which existed before the tenth century.

External ties of the villages intensified after the beginning of the second millennium. Status within the larger society assumed an increasing importance during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, from the reign of Airlangga onwards. No longer was tax relief granted to **sīma** holders as great as it had been in preceding centuries, but as financial benefits declined, they were replaced by longer and longer lists of royally-granted special privileges. These privileges, **wnang**, consisted largely of the freedom to display a number of visible status markers: to wear certain kinds of cloth, eat certain foods, build certain kinds of shrines, or embellish public buildings, and so forth. No two of the privilege lists were exactly the same, the various privileges being granted separately rather than in blocks. A complex and subtle ranking system had begun by this time to link the village to the state, but not, as yet, to break down the village social community.

Paradoxically, as social ties between the village and the state intensified, social and ceremonial distance between the village and the court increased noticeably. During the ninth century the command of the king was communicated to an official, usually a **rakai**, who then passed it on to the villagers involved. By the tenth century another stratum, composed of minor **rakais** and others, was added to the chain of command. The major officials no longer communicated directly with the villages. By the eleventh century a royal command emanated not from the king himself, but from his shoes (**paduka**). By the twelfth, petitioners were addressing the dust beneath those shoes. From this time onwards the list

of officials separating the king and the villager continued to lengthen until the fourteenth century, by which time four-fifths of some charters were consumed in listing them. These changes may indicate some erosion of the status of those at the bottom of the social hierarchy over a period of time. It does not, however, indicate the opening of an unbridgeable gulf between the ruler and the peasant. This same period witnessed the proliferation of intermediary groups, of families neither royal nor truly aristocratic, all of whom appear to have had ambitions to generate status from accumulated wealth. If the ordinary farmer lost ground within the hierarchy, it was due to the rise of a new class (or a series of sub-classes) rather than to the consolidation of power of an old elite alone.

The degree of village absorption into a state-wide social hierarchy and cultural community is consistent more with the *negara* than the "Oriental Despotism" reconstruction of classical Southeast Asian societies. However, the combination of a strong village community with a high level of integration of regional economy through the periodic market is predicted by neither model. The epigraphic evidence for change - incremental and endogenous rather than spasmodic and exogenous - also belies the static image of early states presented by both schools. The record as it stands indicates that wholly synchronic approaches to the study of the early Javanese states, even those existing during a relatively restricted period, are inadequate. Not only did change occur during the period under examination, but it appears in most cases to have been internally-generated change that affected all strata within the society. The process of integration and growth of the early states, and the concomitant changes in the relationships of their members, although neither abruptly revolutionary nor uniformly steady, were largely linear rather than cyclic. Rights ceded to the centre seem not to have been regained, and normative values adjusted to accommodate these changed relations. New states picked up where their predecessors left off, even if what was seen as lost ground had occasionally to be recovered. The history of early Java was not a timeless cycle. It must be borne in mind, however, that the written records available all represent the court's point of view. Their claims of increased social and ritual distance between court and commoner may well have been in advance of reality, and may have held more than an element of propaganda and image-making. This is almost certainly true of assertions made about the exemplary nature of the centre. It was surely true of the image presented in the *wayang*. How thoroughly these court-generated images were accepted at the time in non-royal circles we will never know.

### 3. Conclusion

It is not equally easy to assess the value of all models which have recently been proposed for the study of early Southeast Asian states. Moreover, the testing of these models against data available for a limited period in the history of a circumscribed portion of the region will neither confirm nor invalidate their use elsewhere. No two states in Southeast Asia have ever been identical, although some may be felt to bear family resemblances to others. Given the great ethnic, ecological, and historical diversity of the region, each case, or class of cases, must be tested separately. However, this necessarily brief discussion

of the data concerning the states of Java between the ninth and thirteenth centuries must raise some questions about the general applicability of many of the more widely accepted models. In the case of early Java, while it may be premature to abandon completely some of the models under consideration, none can be accepted *in toto*.

The "Asiatic Mode of Production" and "Hydraulic Society" hypotheses can clearly be set aside altogether. They do not appear to apply to any aspect of early Javanese states for which data exist. Wittfogel's theoretical weakness, which lies in his belief that all complex activities requiring coordination need centralized control, has been noted elsewhere (Hindess and Hirst 1975:215). In the case of Bali's present - and Java's past - irrigation systems, his conclusions are demonstrably wrong, and there is no reason to believe that they are more correct in respect to any other early Southeast Asian state. Without the prop of centralized control of agriculture, the "Hydraulic Society" loses all explanatory coherence. As for the "Asiatic Mode of Production", of which the "Hydraulic Society" presents itself as an explanatory off-shoot, it has apparently no greater applicability. One might assert, with Hindess and Hirst (*ibid*: 180), that the question of its existence is purely theoretical and "cannot be settled with reference to concrete social formations". However, it has been noted (Anderson 1974:490) that, on theoretical grounds alone, the combination of a strong, despotic state superstructure and an infrastructure composed entirely of egalitarian village communes is "intrinsically improbable". Since neither element appears to have arisen in early Java, the model, while it raises useful questions about the nature of the early state, here holds no answers. Java's aristocracy was too strong and its royalty too weak, its villages too hierarchical and its regions too well integrated, its economy too sophisticated but too decentralized, its religion too unfocused, and its history too linear for any of its states to qualify as an "Oriental Despotism".

On the other hand, Java's rulers were neither temporally impotent nor ritually potent enough to qualify them for the lead in a "theatre state" as defined by Geertz. Their lineages were too undervalued and their positions vis à vis the *rakais* too strong and too secularized for their states to have resembled closely any of Africa's segmentary polities. The structure of Javanese states was more cohesive than predicted by the *maṅḍala* and "galactic polity" models. Javanese villages were of greater importance within the early states than allowed for by recent reconstructions, and the regional trade in which they participated was of far greater moment than any of the models predict. All of the hypotheses proposed by the broadly defined "Sociological" school fail in some key areas to fit the Javanese data, but none fail so completely as those produced by the "Oriental Despotism" school. With some reassessment, a workable model could be produced from amongst the "Sociological" proposals which would be more consistent with the data. However, too ready acceptance of the idea of Asian timelessness is a flaw that the "Sociological" approaches share with those of the "Oriental Despotism" school. Over-reliance upon backward extrapolation from present ethnographic data makes it vital to defend the strength of continuity in order to justify the necessarily synchronic approach to a society. Geertz's *negara* lacks a dynamic and historical character. The *maṅḍala*, "galactic polity" and "segmentary state" models affirm the circularity of the history of the states they

describe. This assumed historical stasis - and the pervasive influence of Weber - leave these models open to the charge of perpetuating the idea, as old as Aristotle, that there exists some sort of ontological difference between the "mentalities" of Europe and Asia (Said 1978: 259). Geertz certainly posits a radically different political "mentality". Whether such fundamental differences really do exist remains open to question.

The application of opposing models to the study of early Southeast Asian societies is a relatively recent phenomenon. Both of the major schools of thought discussed above have developed during the post-war period within circles of scholars interested in the region. All appear to accept, either explicitly or by implication, much of the heritage of the Further Indianists, of Heine-Geldern, and of Weber. The roots of the present disputes lie in positions assumed in the fifties and sixties, which have been vigorously and somewhat uncritically defended ever since. These schisms, divisive as they may be, do at least draw attention to the need for further research, and to the more fundamental and potentially damaging division which has developed within the field between specialists who have access to primary data relating to the period under study and those who have been in the forefront of theoretical discussion, but who lack either direct access to the epigraphic and archaeological data or adequate secondary material which presents and discusses that body of data. The result has been a disjunction between data and theory, and the fault lies with us all. We need new models, based upon closer study and more active discussion of the available data.



## NOTES

1. After a long period of neglect, the AMP in recent years has not only been revived, but has enjoyed a considerable vogue in academic circles, due in part, perhaps, to the debate engendered by the theoretical excesses of Wittfogel, who claims his work to be the logical extension of the AMP. Study of the AMP has, in fact, achieved the dimensions of a mini-industry, particularly amongst critical and political anthropologists. See for instance CERM 1969, Anderson 1974, Krader 1975, Hindess and Hirst 1975, Sawyer 1977, Tichelman 1980, Bailey and Llobera 1981, Claessen and Skalnik 1981, Kahn and Llobera 1981, among others.
2. Marx's shift of emphasis from the despotic state superstructure above to the isolated, communal villages at the base has engendered disputes over the nature of the AMP and its applicability. The tendency of many political anthropologists has been to focus upon the village, its kin relationships, communal property and internal cohesion (Anderson 1974: 486). Many view the AMP as a transitional stage in the development of classless into class societies, and thus see in the AMP the most primitive and archaic of state types. Godelier, for instance, has been criticised by Mandel (1971) for playing down the role of irrigation in his definition of AMP and for his "primitivist tendencies" (Bailey 1981: 92). On the other hand, Godelier and Friedman have rejected, as verging on vulgar materialism, functionalist approaches to the AMP (ibid: 96). See also Krader 1975:291.
3. Geertz's rather extreme position on the non-governmental role of the ruler in the classical Southeast Asian polity is not, however, shared to the same degree by all within the "Sociological" school.
4. Wukiran charter. Sarkar 1971: XXV.
5. Mantyaśih charter. Sarkar 1971: LXX.
6. This is reflected in the major burst of centralized temple construction which occurred during the late eighth and early ninth centuries in the central Javanese plains. This appears to have been the period during which the Javanese state, once formed, was being consolidated. This consolidation process was apparently completed by the middle of the ninth century, and after this the shift in the pattern of *sīma* grants (and the reasoning behind them) reflects a shift in royal attention to the strategic regions of the northern periphery.
7. See Christie 1982:93; 1983:14; Casparis 1981:136-7.
8. See Goris 1954; also Christie 1982: appendix C, for the series of inscriptions concerning Sembiran and Julah.
9. In a land transaction in the village of Hring in East Java, dated A.D. 937, the purchaser paid 5 *katis* and 9 *suvārṇas* in gold for six and one-quarter *tampahs* of *sawah* land, and 1 *kati*, 13 *suvārṇas* and 1 *māśa* for only one and one-quarter *tampahs* of house land (*pomahan*). Brandes 1913: XLVII.
10. See, for instance, the Taragal charter, A.D. 860 (Boechari n.d.: 2.23.la.1-5), or the Gunung Hyang charter of A.D. 872 (Boechari n.d.: 2.14.la.1-5).
11. Kamalagyan charter, A.D. 1037. Brandes 1913: LXI; Christie 1983: 492-503.

12. See the Kasugihan charter of A.D. 927. Poerbatjaraka 1922: A5.
13. As body shapes became simpler, rims became correspondingly complex, the simple everted rims of the older tradition being retained mainly in the **jun** or water-carrying jar. The majority of these **jun**, however, appear, both in the interior and in the coastal region, not to have been made or distributed by professional pottery-making centres. These fragile, thin-walled, and presumably most easily broken of vessels were almost certainly made more locally than most of the harder, heavier wares. The fabrics of these jars are far more variable than those of other vessels, and it is probable that the fragility of these jars - made as light as possible - means that consumption was too high and carriage too difficult for professional centres to supply a very wide territory. This separation in the manufacture of water jars and other vessels has also been noted in early Sumatran sites (Bronson and Wisseman 1978:228), and is confirmed by the East Javanese inscriptions, which invariably class the **adyun** (**jun** maker) amongst the village-bound, possibly part-time producers. Christie 1982:158-61.
14. Pātakan charter. Brandes 1913: LIX.23.
15. Kambang Putih charter. Brandes 1913: CXVIII.10.
16. Manañjung charter. Stutterheim 1928; Christie 1982:504-12.

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# 5

## Some Remarks on Early State Formation in Cambodia

Michael Vickery

A cardinal principle of historical investigation, in particular when a hitherto unknown or unstudied part of the world comes under scholarly scrutiny, should be to study first of all the primary contemporary sources before attempting a synthesis from secondary material written retrospectively or by observers from a different polity or culture. If the sources are of a distinct cultural type, it is also necessary to subject them to an analytical critique rather than simply assume that they are statements of fact after the manner of European archival records.

The history of early Cambodia was pieced together in a directly contrary manner. In his "Tchen-la et Panduranga", Pierre Dupont wrote that 'the history of this ancient period (Funan, Chen-la, pre-Angkor) rests on two independent traditions', which were first the Chinese historical texts based ultimately on contacts between China and Cambodia several centuries before the date of the extant Chinese writings, and second the local dynastic traditions of the Angkor period which made some connections between Angkor kings and pre-Angkor rulers.[1]

There is a third tradition which, if Dupont did not ignore it entirely, he definitely relegated to inferior status, as had his predecessors. That is the corpus of pre-Angkor Cambodian inscriptions of the sixth to eighth centuries. Textbook 'Funan', 'Chen-la', and their dynasties have been for the most part studied from Dupont's first two traditions; and even if the inadequacy of that procedure is now recognized, scholars have not entirely freed themselves from it.[2] It is not enough to recognize that the Chinese categories 'Funan' and 'Chen-la' may be misleading, or even meaningless. Absolute primacy must be given to contemporary records; and 'contemporary' does not mean treatment of the entire pre-Angkor plus Angkor epoch, nor even the Angkor period alone, as a synchronic whole. It was not a static society; 'state', 'kingship', administration and land organisation varied over the centuries; and in the first analysis seventh-century inscriptions, for example, must be used for the history of the seventh century, etc.

In what follows I wish to demonstrate some of the neglected contemporary evidence for the development of the upper levels of the state apparatus in early Cambodia.

### Elite origins

It should be *a priori* obvious, without labouring the point, that a state develops in one of two ways: 1. an original primitive society, in its internal development, separates into strata and classes, a ruling elite emerges, eventually 'kings' appear; 2. conquest by a more developed power imposes that state's organization, which is filled out by local personnel.[3]

To the extent that the process was given any consideration at all, it was assumed that the second way had prevailed in early Cambodia. Indeed such seems to have been the idea picked up by the Chinese from the early Funanese, with their stories of an Indian Kaunḍinya bringing civilization and state organization; and it is implied in the Angkor genealogies which trace several lines of descent back to 'Indian' brahmins. As Dupont emphasized, however, such ancestors are most probably fictitious; and no more credence can be given to a Kaundinya who is also part of the mythology of southern India.[4] If the Funanese really believed in Kaunḍinya, it means that their state development was old enough for them to have forgotten its origins.

Setting such myths aside, there is evidence even in the Chinese reports on Funan that Funanese royalty was local, not of Indian origin. This is the Funanese, and Lin Yi, title for king, 'fan', which cannot be identified with any Indian term, and must be a strictly local title from one of the local languages, Khmer, Cham, or another Mon-Khmer language.

This is the first subject I wish to discuss - the contemporary seventh to eighth century evidence for elite stratification and formation of pre-Angkor royalty. Most of this evidence has been ignored in the standard treatment of pre-Angkor history.

The pre-Angkor inscriptions feature several official and divine titles which do not occur again after the eighth century. The most frequently occurring such title is 'poñ', the bearers of which appear in nearly all parts of pre-Angkor Cambodia, from the far south to Kratie, as founders and donors of the gods and temples commemorated by the inscriptions. In spite of the *prima facie* implication that poñ were an important pre-Angkor elite group, they have received no attention at all in Coedès' *Etats*, Briggs's *Empire*, or Dupont's important articles on pre-Angkor Cambodia, while Sahai in his *Institutions* dismissed them with 'les poñ ... n'exercaient pas de hautes fonctions', and in his chapter on 'L'administration territoriale', did not mention them at all.[5]

The assumption that poñ were merely subaltern functionaries is definitely mistaken. Some of them were closely associated with kings and in the inscriptions where the latter are named, poñ appear to have ranked directly below them. The earliest inscription of this type, from Isanavarman's reign (616?-635?), shows the king, in the Sanskrit part, praising his 'servant', Bhadradyudha who was responsible for the foundation, and in the Khmer text Bhadradyudha's rank is poñ. A few years later a man who seems to belong to the important family of Ādhyapura which provided ministers to five kings and was the greatest aristocratic family in pre-Angkor epigraphy, appears with the rank of poñ.[6] The same prominence of poñ continued under Jayavarman I (657-681). Three inscriptions in three provinces show poñ in close association with the king in the establishment of foundations. In Prey Veng in 664 Jayavarman ordered that poñ Śubhakirti acquire everything in

the foundation established by his ancestors, including two uncles who were close to the king. In an undated text from Kompong Speu, Jayavarman and a 'sacrificer' ranked as **poñ** jointly erected a divinity; and in 681 in Takeo a **poñ** Bhavacandra is mentioned right after the king as 'sacrificer' and donor. Even the last occurrence of the title, in 719, shows **poñ** Śarvvagupta as principal authority for donating fields to a divinity which was his own 'work of merit' (**puṇya**) within the realm and perhaps the reign period of Queen Jayadevī.[7]

The title **poñ**, thus, could be held by members of elite families who were close to kings, and some inscriptions show them as the immediate representatives of kings in establishing a foundation. At other times the lack of any mention of superior authority indicates that the **poñ** may have been acting on their own as both a local political and cult leader. The cult aspect is clear from the frequent mention of **poñ** as 'sacrificers' and donors to temples; and the political-administrative function is explicit in K.41, undated, from Bati, in which the principal donor was a **poñ**, and further donations are listed from 'the following **kloñ sruk**' (district chiefs) who were two **poñ**.

Another indication that **poñ** could be of very high status is K.115/665 AD, from Kompong Cham. There the principal donor was 'ge **kloñ vau añ**, mother of **poñ** Nirjitasinhha'. 'Ge **kloñ**' meant 'princess', 'consort of ruler' and the 'añ' in her title also indicates high rank.[8] Thus **poñ** Nirjitasinhha was probably son of a king or prince.

At the other end of the scale, as rank of apparently low-level authorities within small communities, **poñ** is by far the most frequently occurring title in the pre-Angkor corpus. They are numerous as secondary donors, both when the principal donor was a **poñ** or where he or she held some other rank. Of particular interest at this level is the connection between **poñ** and **travāñ** (man-made pond). In several inscriptions an area is delimited by listing the **travāñ** of various **poñ** surrounding it, and in other contexts **poñ** also appear as possessors of **travāñ**. [9] No other title occurs with any frequency in that position, which calls to mind one of the Chinese notes on Funan: 'Several scores of families have pond in common where they draw water'. [10]

We may hypothesize, then, that in origin **poñ** were the chiefs of small communities living around their artificial ponds in the lowlands of southern Cambodia. As their communities developed politically and economically, the **poñ** became differentiated into strata, some holding high office in early kingdoms, while some remained as chiefs of local pond-centered villages. In fact, since the first royalty must have developed out of existing elites, it is safe to infer, even if proof is impossible, that some **poñ** eventually became the earliest 'kings'.

Since **poñ** are mentioned in inscriptions from Angkor and Kratie, as well as from the south, it seems likely that they were once prominent all over what is now Cambodia, but by mid-seventh century an interesting pattern of areal distinction can be observed between **poñ** and another group of officials, the **mrātāñ**. **Poñ** were particularly prominent west of the Mekong, below Phnom Penh, in particular the modern provinces of southern Kandal, Takeo and Kampot, and probably around Ba Phnom, in Prey Veng province on the eastern side of the river. In northern Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, and northern Kandal, however, none of the inscriptions except an early one in the reign of Iśanavarman, and K.115 from Kompong Cham, cited above, gives great importance to **poñ**. [11]

**Mratāñ**, it would appear, were gradually replacing **poñ**, first in the central and northern parts of the country, and by the late eighth century the title '**poñ**' had completely disappeared, while '**mratāñ**' continued in use as a component of important official titles throughout most of the Angkor period. Within the typical structure of the pre-Angkor inscriptions **mratāñ** and **poñ** occupy exactly equivalent positions, but with few exceptions, whenever both occur together, **mratāñ** always have precedence. There are examples of two types of hierarchical superiority, where a **mratāñ** was father of a **poñ**, and where a **poñ** is designated subordinate of a **mratāñ**. [12] The converse never occurs.

An immediately noticeable difference in their functions is that although **mratāñ** occupy the higher positions, they are only very rarely listed as possessors of ponds or fields, while **poñ** associated with ponds and fields, or other geographical-economic features, are seen in several inscriptions. [13] This might suggest that the class of **poñ** arose from below in the early formation of society, as a native ruling stratum separated out from the primitive community, while **mratāñ** was a later title adopted by a new ruling group and imposed over the **poñ**.

This view is supported by one significant exception to **mratāñ** precedence over **poñ** within an inscription (admitting that a single case is insufficient to construct a theory), K.557/611 AD, which is also the earliest extant Khmer text. There a **poñ** with a native name, and with no reference to supra-local authority, is principal donor to the first named divinity, which also has a native, non-Sanskritic title, while a **mratāñ** was in charge of a second foundation. Had both titles always been part of a single hierarchy, we would expect their relative positions to have been invariable.

Whatever their origins, by the seventh century both titles were in use concurrently within a single hierarchical system covering lowland Cambodia. Throughout that century **poñ** occurs with decreasing frequency, and however important individual **poñ** appear, that title never occurs for any position of more than local authority. **Mratāñ**, on the other hand, increases in frequency and, in combination with other terms, forms titles of increasing rank and apparently wider authority.

One example, K.939 from Takeo, mentions a **mratāñ kloñ Bhavapura**, '**mratāñ** chief of Bhavapura' in **sruk** (district, country) of Bhavapura, a type of name indicating important entities, including recognized kingdoms, in early Cambodia; and from the other side of the Hatien canal K.1 also mentions **mratāñ kloñ Bhavapura** and a predecessor, **mratāñ kloñ Jeṣṭhapura**. In an even later inscription in Takeo from the last half of the seventh century, the ranks are further enhanced and we find a **mratāñ kurun** (**kurun** = 'king') Vikramapura who was the hierarchical superior of **mratāñ kloñ Rājagraha**. [14]

The inscriptions just cited also provide evidence of the emergence of kings from local elites. The king known as Bhavavarman II has always posed a problem for historians who wished to see a united Cambodia (Chen-la) ruled by a neat succession of legitimate kings. [15] His inscriptions fall in between the known dates of Iśanavarman and Jayavarman I, yet there is no indication of a relationship to either, and the important ministerial family of Āḍhyapura ignored him. Four inscriptions may be attributed with some certainty to Bhavavarman II, three in southern Takeo, of which one is dated 639, and one in Kompong Chhnang, near the confluence of the Tonle Sap and Chinit Rivers. His 'realm' then seems to have been right where a **mratāñ kloñ Bhavapura**

governed, and I suggest the latter was the same chief just before he assumed the higher title of *rājā* Bhavavarman.[16] He was very likely a rival to Isanavarman toward the end of the latter's reign, which would explain his omission from the inscription of those officials who supported Isanavarman and, later on, Jayavarman I.

Since all of the inscriptions of *Rājā* Bhavavarman are in Sanskrit, we cannot know whether he claimed any Khmer title higher than *mratāñ kloñ*, such as those used by later royalty. These more usually recognized royal titles were based on '*mratāñ*' - *kamratāñ* (k prefix + *mratāñ*), *kamratāñ añ*, and *vrah kamratāñ añ*, the last equivalent to 'His Majesty' and the most characteristic term for 'king'.

*Vrah kamratāñ añ* was also a title for divinities, in fact the most characteristic in the seventh to eighth centuries, and thus during that time there was often no distinction in titulature between kings and gods, a matter of intrinsic interest in itself. As a title for gods, *vrah kamratāñ añ* appears in the very first Khmer inscriptions of 611, and during the first quarter of the seventh century was clearly more prestigious than any contemporary title used for living beings.

At some point, however, this divine title was also adopted by men claiming kingship, although the record on the process is not clear. In an undated inscription from *Isanapura* (Sambor Prei Kuk) an official claims to have served the *vrah kamratāñ añ* Bhavavarman (I), Mahendravarman, and *Isanavarman*; and the text could have been written after the reign of the last, possibly as late as the 650s.[17] Thus it does not prove that any of those kings adopted that title, only that it was current at the writing of the inscription. The same consideration affects interpretation of K.44 of 673, which attributes *vrah kamratāñ añ* to Raudravarman, presumably the conventional 'Rudravarman' of 'Funan'.

In 639, an inscription of Bhavavarman II contains an unclear mention of the *vrah kamratāñ añ kamratāñ sruk* ('district') *nā* (at/of) *jlañ kaol* (probably a toponym), which in Coedès' view could have been either god or king; and the first dated inscription in which *vrah kamratāñ añ* was indubitably claimed by a living king is a 664 edict of Jayavarman I. Probably somewhat earlier than 664 is the undated text in which *vrah kamratāñ añ* was assumed by the principal official of the foundation, a certain *Śrī Śālagrāmasvāmi*, whom Coedès said in astonishment was 'neither a god nor a king', reflecting, I should say, Coedès' fixed ideas about pre-Angkor political structure and 'legitimate' rulers. It is more in accord with the total pre-Angkor scene to suppose that *Śrī Śālagrāmasvāmi* was a local chief trying to enhance his status and as legitimate a *vrah kamratāñ añ* as any other lord of the time; and I suggest his earlier date because in 657 a nearby inscription indicates that Jayavarman I had established his pre-eminence over that area.[18]

The importance of the demonstration is that in the earliest records of Cambodia gods were given enhanced forms of the titles assumed by political/administrative/cult chiefs, who then took the divine titles for themselves, and this led eventually to a step-by-step enhancement of both divine and secular titles. With respect to their titles, gods, kings, and lower-level chiefs were ranked in a single continuum.

This relationship can also be seen in the *poñ* titles representing a class of chiefs superseded by *mratāñ*. In the earliest Khmer inscription of 611, which is also the only one giving *poñ* precedence over *mratāñ*,

the god for whom the **poñ** took responsibility was called **kpoñ kamratāñ añ**, in which '**kpoñ**' (k prefix + **poñ**) stands in the same relationship to **poñ** as **kamratāñ** to **mratāñ**. In this hierarchy too gods and human chiefs were ranked in a single line.

The **kpoñ** divinities are also interesting in their own right. Nine of them, with or without '**kamratāñ añ**' occur in the extant corpus, all but one, in 713, in the seventh century. Most are in the south in what was probably 'Funan'; at least four were definitely female divinities, one of them being a Devī Caturbhujā (four-armed Devī), possibly one of the Māhiṣāsūramardanī who figured as important cult figures well into modern times.[19]

A thorough discussion of the origins and etymologies of the pre-Angkor titles is important for study of the early states, although it cannot be undertaken here. I would suggest that many of them are not Khmer, and '**poñ**' offers material for interesting comparisons which I submit for consideration. First, '**poñ**' would seem to be related to the Mon title '**bañā**', and second, '**poñ**' appears as the most likely indigenous term behind the Chinese '**fan**', used in their histories for kings of Funan and Lin Yi. Karlgren restored '**fan**' as \*b<sup>h</sup>ǰwām/b<sup>h</sup>ǰwām; and the difference in final nasals may render the identification untenable, but since '**poñ**' is the only pre-Angkor title bearing any resemblance to '**fan**/\*b<sup>h</sup>ǰwām, it deserves further attention.[20]

One more strictly pre-Angkor title which is both of intrinsic interest and perhaps valuable in tracing the development of kingship is '**kurāk**'. It occurs in twelve contexts, all but one in the pre-Angkor heartland, and nine of them indicate some territorial responsibility, although all but one of the toponyms are insignificant and unidentifiable.[21] In two cases '**kurāk**' is followed by '**kloñ**', making a parallel with '**mratāñ kloñ**'; and one of these is **kurāk kloñ Vyādhapura**, a place which has long been considered as the most important centre of pre-Angkor Cambodia, and the capital of Funan. Interesting with respect to the development of pre-Angkor historiography and the structure of pre-Angkor history, is that the inscription naming 'the **kurāk**, chief of Vyādhapura', is the only pre-Angkor reference to that place, and also the only text naming it which has never been utilized in the discussions of its location.[22]

In fact, this inscription is one of the most valuable for situating Vyādhapura in the pre-Angkor period, and together with other related texts seems to provide evidence of the origins of Jayavarman I, the most important ruler of the seventh to eighth centuries who can be recognized in the extant corpus.

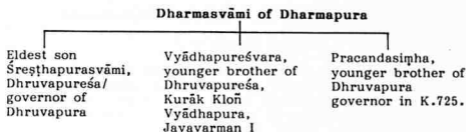
The Sanskrit part of K.109 which is dated 655, names a King of Vyādhapura (**vyādhapuresvara**) who was younger brother of the ruler of Dhruvapura (**dhruvapuresa**); and the following Khmer text says that **kurāk kloñ Vyādhapura** made donations to the god **vrah kamratāñ añ Rudramahālaya**. In the typical structure of the inscriptions the **kurāk kloñ** is to be identified with the **isvara** of Vyādhapura, indicating that '**kurāk kloñ**', like '**mratāñ kloñ**' elsewhere, was being used by a man claiming authority over a -**pura**, and in this case one of the most important, a situation which for pre-Angkor times has hitherto been accepted as denoting 'kingship'.

Two years later, King Jayavarman I erected his earliest known inscription about 30 km southwest of the Kurāk Kloñ's.[23]

Some time later in his reign, K.725, an undated entirely Sanskrit

inscription about 52 km west of the Kurāk Kloñ's, following eulogy of the king, relates the activities of an official family whose genealogy bears an interesting resemblance to the Kurāk Kloñ's (K.109) in that it also refers to a governor of Dhruvapura, who had formerly been chief of Śreṣṭhapura (śreṣṭhapurasvāmi), and his younger brother. The latter was companion (paricaraka) of the king and holder of several important functions under Jayavarman I, and their father Dharmasvami of Dharmapura was agrāsana of kings.[24]

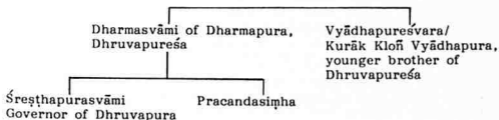
Obviously there is cause to search for a relationship between these two texts, in rather close spatial and temporal proximity and each erected by persons related to a chief of Dhruvapura. A first possibility, particularly if K.725 dates from early in Jayavarman's reign, is that its governor of Dhruvapura and the Dhruvapureśa of 655 are identical; and the combined genealogy would be:



The age relationship of the second and third could be reversed.

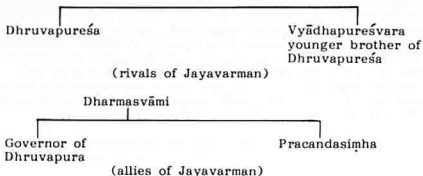
Jayavarman I would thus have emerged from a local elite family, who had perhaps been vassals or supporters of the earlier kings, and there is nothing in what we otherwise know of him to contradict this picture. A first objection, that he was not the eldest son, is easily countered by the numerous examples of younger son succession throughout the pre-Angkor and Angkor periods. They are sufficient to indicate that younger son succession, or even ultimogeniture, may have been a normal pattern.[25]

An alternative possibility, if K.725 was from the end of Jayavarman's reign, is that the two chiefs of Dhruvapura were different persons, the second a descendant of the first, in which case the first would have to be Dharmasvāmi, thus:



The Vyādhapureśvara of 655 would still be Jayavarman I, whose first recorded use of the latter title is 657. Any explanation which rejects these inferences, dissociating Jayavarman from Vyādhapureśvara, would mean that he overthrew the Vyādhapura-Dhruvapura family and replaced them with his own supporters, Dharmasvāmi and sons. This would

still mean that the Kurāk Kloñ Vyādhapura was a chief claiming near royal status and a rival of the rising Jayavarman, who would have been of another provincial elite family. Sociologically it would be the same situation - emergence of supra-local authority and kings from among competing elite groups. Schematically the situation would have been:



It is also essential to call attention to the implications of these inscriptions for the localization of Vyādhapura, which assumed great importance in later retrospective texts of the Angkor period, and in modern hypotheses about 'Funan' and 'Chen-la'. I believe it must have been in the vicinity of K.109, probably at the site of Banteay Prey Nokor, about 28 km further east. It is at least unwise in discussing Vyādhapura to ignore the only contemporary evidence for its location, or even for its pre-Angkor existence. This leads to a response to one more possible objection to the reconstruction I proposed above, that the **kurāk kloñ** was only a subordinate district official appointed by higher authority, Jayavarman, or earlier by Iśanavarman. If so, then the localization of Vyādhapura near K.109 is strengthened. It cannot be argued both that the **kurāk kloñ** was a nonentity and that Vyādhapura was somewhere else.

The foregoing remarks illustrate some of the neglected areas of the pre-Angkor material, a close reading of which permits quite different interpretations than have hitherto been current. It seems likely that Iśanavarman, who may have continued his predecessors' line, Bhavavarman II, and Jayavarman I, were of different origins and had their power centres in different places. There seem also to have been other contemporaries making claims to kinship, perhaps with equal legitimacy (**mratañ kloñ** Jeṣṭhapura, **mratañ kuruñ** Vikramapura, **vraḥ kamratañ añ śrī Śālagrāmasvāmi**, and others not discussed here). Dupont was correct in postulating a multiplicity of political centres in 'Chen-la' (we can now see that the concept of 'Chen-la' is quite useless), although none of the parallel dynasties which he derived from retrospective Angkorean records, except that of Śambhupura (Sambor-Kratié), find a place in the contemporary evidence from the pre-Angkor period.[26]

### Pre-Angkor to Angkor transition

It is now useful to take a new look at the Angkor genealogies which Dupont used as a basis for examining 'Chen-la' and for the reconstitution of the kingdom under Jayavarman II. These are the genealogies of Indravarman (877-889), the third Angkor king, his son Yaśovarman



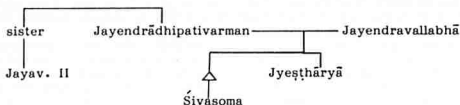
(889-900), and Rājendravarman (944-968); and they, together with the genealogical information in the inscriptions of Jayavarman VII (1181-1220?) constitute what Dupont called one of the two categories of evidence for pre-Angkor history.[27] They do provide an imposing edifice of parallel pre-Angkor dynasties but an immediate difficulty with this structure is that of the sixteen named ancestors beyond the parents of the ninth-century kings, only one may with some certainty be identified with an individual known from the pre-Angkor corpus,[28] while none of the mainstream kings of the pre-Angkor inscriptions, or the Sambhupura dynasty recorded in K.124 of 803, or any other supra-local chief mentioned in contemporary seventh to eighth century texts finds mention in the genealogies at all.

Dupont got around this problem by supposing that the Angkor kings, beginning with Jayavarman II, were not descended from the 'dynasty of Bhavavarman I' of Chen-la, and thus deliberately ignored them in their records; and he assumed that Chen-la covered a much larger area than now seems likely. (He considered that the important dynasty of Bhavapura, ancestors of some of the ninth-century kings, was located in Laos, thus outside the area of pre-Angkor records.)[29] Such an explanation calls into question the factual accuracy of the Angkor genealogies; and in fact, Dupont admitted that parts of them were fictitious, but considered it irrelevant. That is, the several pairs of Brahman-princess marriages, with names clearly reflecting Indian mythology, could not possibly have been Cambodian ancestors. Nevertheless, the real kings and queens, 'had parents and family ... the chronological framework [which can be set up on the basis of the genealogies] remains valid, whether or not [the ancestors] were kings, brahmans, princesses'.[30] Of course everyone had ancestors, but their true identification is sociologically important in determining the early growth of the society in which they lived and the truth or fiction of the parallel dynasties which Dupont wished to identify. We still have, then, a dual problem with these genealogies - their factual truth, and if they are not true, the purpose which they were intended to serve; and in addition to Dupont's admission of their partial inaccuracy is the consideration that in view of the ample 'coverage' of pre-Angkor in the seventh-century corpus, it is very nearly impossible that none of the ancestors of Dupont's parallel dynasties should find mention.

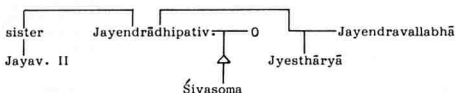
Recent work has already modified much of what had been accepted as the standard view of pre-Angkor history. Claude Jacques' new dating of the reign of Jayavarman II, for example, ascribing to him the inscriptions of 770 and 781 previously identified with a Jayavarman Ibis, permits a hypothetical linking of Jayavarman II with seventh-century elite families.[31] Those two inscriptions suggest that his career began in the area where K.109 seems to place Vyādhapura, and that he was later active in Sambhupura where one of the donors of the 803 inscription was a relative,[32] before he moved toward the Angkor region.

This firmer situation of Jayavarman II in relation to Sambhupura suggests new interpretations of two other texts. Sometime between 878 and 887, Indravarman's *ācāryya*, Śivasoma, set up an inscription tracing his own descent from a king Jayendrādhīpativarman (**Jayendra-adhipati** ['king'] -**varman**), who had been maternal uncle of Jayavarman II, the only link hitherto recognized between the latter and earlier royalty.[33] Assuming it to be a true record, it suggests another

relationship between Jayavarman II and the individuals of the 803 inscription from Kratie, a place where he had already left a foundation in 781. The genealogy of the 803 text is Indraloka - Nṛpendradevī - Jayendra[valla]bhā - Jyeṣṭhāryā, in a direct line of descent with no mention of the male consorts of the last three individuals, all queens or princesses. If Coedès' restoration of the name of the next-to-last queen is correct, it meant 'beloved of Jayendra', suggesting that she may have been consort of the Jayendrādhīpativarman who was Jayavarman II's mother's brother. Thus:



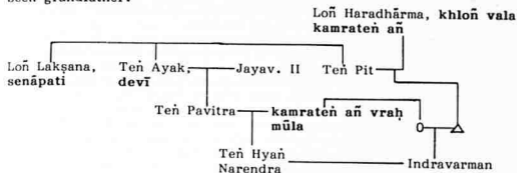
OR:



The first genealogy left by any king, that of Indravarman, ignores his predecessors, the second and third Jayavarmans, although he dedicated images to them in his temples, and it traces his ancestry through three ascending generations whose names are not found in earlier texts. This does suggest, as Dupont thought, that Indravarman represented a parallel dynasty taking power in Angkor from the Jayavarmans.[34] and it would also suggest, whether fictitious or not, that Indravarman was claiming a more ancient lineage than his predecessors.

Since the publication of Coedès' seventh volume of inscriptions we have a check on Indravarman's claims which was not available to Dupont and has never been integrated into the synthesized versions of Angkor history. Number K.956 of Vat Samrōn in Ba Phnom is the record of an official family apparently written just after the reign of Yaśovarman (889-900), that is, by people who had lived during Indravarman's reign.[35] Its authors state that in the time of Jayavarman II they had three ancestors on their mother's, and her mother's, side - two females and a male, presumably siblings, though this is not stated. The male was a general (*senāpati*); one female, Teñ Ayak, was a queen in Bhavapura; and the other married a *khloñ vala* ('chief of troops') of *kamraten añ* who (the *khloñ vala*) was an ancestor (*ajl*) of Indravarman. Jayavarman II brought them from Bhavapura and engendered six children.[36] Contrary to Coedès' hesitation in attributing precise parentage to the children, they can only be the children of Teñ Ayak and Jayavarman II, since the marriage and family of the other female are treated separately; and this answers the question whether she was queen of Jayavarman II or of another king of Bhavapura. She was queen of Jayavarman II in Bhavapura.[37]

The inscription then takes the family through three generations in which Indravarman is not only descendant of one of them, but also marries a granddaughter of Teñ Ayak and Jayavarman II. This can be seen most clearly in schematic form, which shows Indravarman solidly situated in a family both descended from and related by marriage to Jayavarman II. The only difference from Coedès' schema, within the area of comparability, is to make explicit the marriage of Teñ Ayak and Jayavarman II and their parentage of Teñ Pavitra, and to insert Indravarman and his father. Although *aji*, the specified relationship of Loñ Haradhārma to Indravarman, may mean any ancestor beyond the father's generation, the time span means that he must in fact have been grandfather.



Here then is the 'secret history' of Indravarman's family. It is not totally incompatible with his own official genealogy. His father could still have been named 'Pṛthivīndravarman', but he is unlikely to have been king of a parallel dynasty; and who was the *kamraten añ* whom Indravarman's paternal grandfather served as *khloñ vala*? On the other side Indravarman's mother, and her brother the *kamraten añ vrah mūla*, another enigmatic high title, could have been children of a Rudravarman, as in the official genealogy. The latter then, would not be incorrect, except perhaps in the status implied by the names in *-varman*, but deliberately incomplete.[38] The lower ranking relatives are excised as is the connection to Jayavarman II, the maternal grandfather of one of Indravarman's consorts as well as brother-in-law of Indravarman's paternal grandfather. Indravarman's close connection to his predecessors' family is also emphasized in the Vat Saṃprōṇ text by the story of a fraternal elephant hunt on which he accompanied Jayavarman III; and this family connection gives more meaning to Indravarman's dedication of an image to Indraloka, name of the ultimate ancestor in the 803 inscription, who now appears as a distant ancestor of Jayavarman II as well.[39]

The purpose of Indravarman's official genealogy was clearly not to record true ancestry, but was probably a semi-fictional claim to ancient lineage to justify his succession to the kingship over other members of his, and Jayavarman's, family. The necessity for such a claim would derive from the succession rules of the time, of which we know nothing, but about which we may eventually be able to make useful inferences through study of the genealogies as claims to status rather than statements of historical fact.

Yaśovarman's genealogy proceeds in the same manner - in order to encompass predecessors in a structure in which his own direct ancestry

peaks out in an earlier generation than his predecessors', and implicitly earlier, or at a position of higher status, than claims which might be made by rivals in the same generation. Thus Puskaraksa, at the peak, is an ancestor of Yaśovarman, and also, less directly ancestor of Jayavarman II, and of the latter's descendants, unnamed, who were Yaśovarman's contemporaries.[40]

This process of increasing the pyramidal distance in generations of the genealogy from 'eg' continued with Rājendrarvarman, about whom the records are more complex and contradictory than for any of his predecessors and contemporaries. Examination of the complexities, in addition to illustrating the process of genealogical pyramid building, also casts light on the position of Jayavarman IV, whether he was an usurper, as assumed by conventional history, or a legitimate member of the dynasty according to the rules of the time.

The first two references to Rājendrarvarman are in fact from the reign of Jayavarman IV. In one of them he called Rājendrarvarman his elder brother of the same mother; and in the second, from the next-to-last year of his reign, Rājendrarvarman appears as the protagonist with the title *dhūli jeñ kamsteñ añ*, just slightly below that of king, thus serving loyally the man whose son he was to succeed.[41]

There are several genealogical inscriptions of Rājendrarvarman himself, each emphasizing slightly different details. In the first he claimed an ancestry going back to the *rishi* Kambu and the 'first king of the Kambujās', thus upstaging all of his predecessors' claims. 'In that family' were Indrarvarman, Yaśovarman, Jayavarman IV, Harṣavarman, 'and the others' (but not explicitly Jayavarman II and III). In several other inscriptions he claimed to be elder brother of Harṣavarman, son of Jayavarman IV. The two last, and most complete, genealogies include Jayavarman II and III in the dynasty; and, finally, instead of making Rājendrarvarman implicitly son of Jayavarman IV, identify his parents as Mahendrarvarman and Mahendradevī, although Harṣavarman is still called his younger brother, which must be understood as younger first cousin. If we ignore the distant mythical ancestors, his genealogy peaks out with a 'Nṛpatīndrarvarman', father of Puṣkarākṣa, thus one generation beyond Yaśovarman's ancestors.[42]

This last detail is the first which I wish to discuss. On Coedès' standard table there are two Nṛpatīndrarvarmans; but no genealogical inscription mentions more than one. Indrarvarman proclaimed an uncomplicated ancestry going back to Nṛpatīndrarvarman (Nṛpati ['king'] Indrarvarman), who is perhaps to be identified with the Indraloka whom Indrarvarman evoked in an important text;[43] and it seems to have given him genealogical precedence over the descendants of Jayavarman II. Yaśovarman called Nṛpatīndrarvarman father of Rudrarvarman's wife, while making Puṣkarākṣa, apparently unrelated to Nṛpatīndrarvarman, the founder of his line. Then Rājendrarvarman made Nṛpatīndrarvarman father of Puṣkarākṣa.

All of those positions of Nṛpatīndrarvarman may be filled by a single individual, particularly if the link between Puṣkarākṣa and Rājendrarvarman I is modified, in a way the text permits, and as I have shown on my revised table. We may thus more easily observe how pyramidal genealogies of increasing height were constructed in order to establish precedence over contemporaries.

Although all the positions in this genealogy are plausibly true, their constant reworking, and the imputation of different genealogical

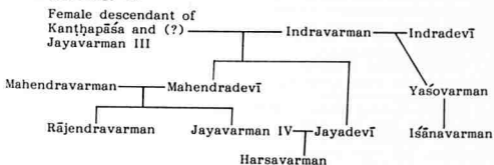
heights to a single individual, indicates that some organizational principle, contemporary to each generation, was of greater importance than historical fact.

This can be demonstrated for one detail of Rājendravarman's genealogy just as it was for Indravarmān's immediate family, with a detail of 'secret history' squirrelled away in an unnoticed text, K.165. This inscription of 952 is concerned with the claims to land of a family of *vāp* rank who were related to Rājendravarman's mother, called there '*tān kamraten añ Mahendradevī*'. Among her ancestors were Kaṅṭhapāśa and Brāhmaṇarāsi, also given *vāp* rank, and who elsewhere figure as favourites of Jayavarman III.[44] She thus appears to be of less exalted ancestry than was ascribed to her in her son's inscription, but nevertheless of high official lineage. In fact, however, the Palhal inscription which details Kaṅṭhapāśa's lineage, lists several women, including some with the court titles *teñ*, *teñ hyañ*, and *-devī*, and their children, without naming the men involved. Some of the women are explicitly named as consorts of kings, and many of the others must be implicitly accepted as such. Thus Mahendradevī was probably not only descendant of Kaṅṭhapāśa, but of one of his female relatives and Jayavarman III.

A final point of detail in Rājendravarman's genealogies is the position of Jayavarman IV. The following statements are found in his and Rājendravarman's inscriptions: 1. Jayavarman married an unnamed sister of Isānavarman's father, Yaśovarman; 2. Jayavarman had a son Harṣavarman; 3. Harṣavarman's mother was Jayadevī, younger sister of Mahendradevī; 4. Rājendravarman was elder brother of Jayavarman, of the same mother; 5. Rājendravarman was elder brother (first cousin) of Harṣavarman; 6. Rājendravarman's mother was Mahendradevī.

In attempting to fit these claims into a coherent whole the following corollaries apply: 1. in Khmer terminology 'brother' and 'sister' may indicate half siblings, or even cousins, especially first cousins; 2. there is no explicit connection between Mahendradevī or Jayadevī and Yaśovarman; and it is not necessary to postulate that either of them was the sister of Yaśovarman whom Jayavarman IV married; 3. among Khmer royalty in modern times marriages between half-siblings, nephews and aunts, and uncles and nieces were current, and there is no reason not to assume such possibilities in Angkor times.

Assuming all of the above statements to be true, the simplest plausible genealogy is:



Here Rājendravarman is elder brother of Jayavarman IV and he is elder first cousin (mother's sister's son) of Harṣavarman, which accounts for the seeming contradictory statements that he was elder brother of each.

Alternative possibilities, which do not affect the overall interpretation, are: 1. Mahendradevī and Jayadevī were half-sisters of different mothers; 2. the sister of Yaśovarman whom Jayavarman IV married was not Jayadevī, but another; 3. Indradevī, whose official ancestry is the most suspect, was the link between Kanṭhapāśa and Mahendradevī, and was mother of Mahendradevī, Jayadevī, and Yaśovarman; and 4. Mahendradevī married successively two men, one father of Rājendravarman and another, unknown, father of Jayavarman IV, who would then be half-brother of Rājendravarman.

Whatever the truth about the relationships claimed in the various inscriptions relating to Rājendravarman and Jayavarman IV, and however varied the possible genealogies reconstructible from them, one thing is clear. Jayavarman IV belonged to the royal dynasty and was not considered an usurper under the prevailing rules of the time.

Is it possible to infer the purpose behind these complex, partly faked, genealogies, and, if the system was not anarchic, the rules of succession? Very briefly stated, the practice, from pre-Angkor times, of ranking gods and earthly chiefs in a single hierarchy, and the genealogical pyramid building of the early Angkor reigns, suggest a conical clan. This is a clan in which all members are ranked hierarchically in terms of the degree of relationship to, that is the nearness of descent from, the common ancestor, real or putative, who may merge with a god. When such a clan becomes a state apparatus, state offices are distributed according to clan rank, with the highest ranking member as king. Succession is not necessarily father-to-son primogeniture; 'very frequently, especially in the case of the *aristoi*, descent may be counted through either [men or women] ... that side being chosen which gives a person a higher descent ... the term "ambilateral" has been coined for this system [and] genealogies, ... are here the means of establishing the "line" of descent of the nobles'.[45] This often results in rules prescribing that the kingship pass through individuals of the same generation before descending to the next generation; and such a system may be quite unstable, with the various branches attempting to retain kingship from father to son rather than relinquishing it to the next branch.

At Angkor the successions of Jayavarman III - Indravarman, and then through the Yaśovarman - Jayavarman IV - Rājendravarman branches suggest such rules. Within such a system the succession of Yaśovarman's sons would have represented usurpation against Jayavarman IV, the scion of the *legitimate* branch following Yaśovarman's death; and his move to Koh Ker should perhaps be seen as a legitimist reaction. Then he also attempted to keep the succession in his own family rather than allowing it to pass to Rājendravarman.

The available information does not reveal (or at least I have not discovered) the rules governing the rank order of the lineage branches. It seems nevertheless clear that Jayavarman II and III did not represent the highest ranking lineage, which was that of Indravarman; and that could explain why the descendants of Jayavarman II, or families claiming such descent, formed the ranking groups of the aristocracy/officialdom, but were never again kings, and that when Suryavarman I emerged as king from a period of struggles involving perhaps attempts by descendants of Jayavarman II to increase their power, he and his supporters claimed descent from Indravarman's family.[46]

The royal clan peaked at Nṛpatindravarman (and peaked again with

semi-mythical and mythical ancestors), possibly one of the royalty of Sambhupura who had left a partial genealogy of their own in 803. Angkor, at least until the eleventh century, was a lineage state with royalty and officials all members of a hierarchical conical clan, the lineage of Aninditapura, which in origin was probably a clan name rather than an ancient kingdom.[47]

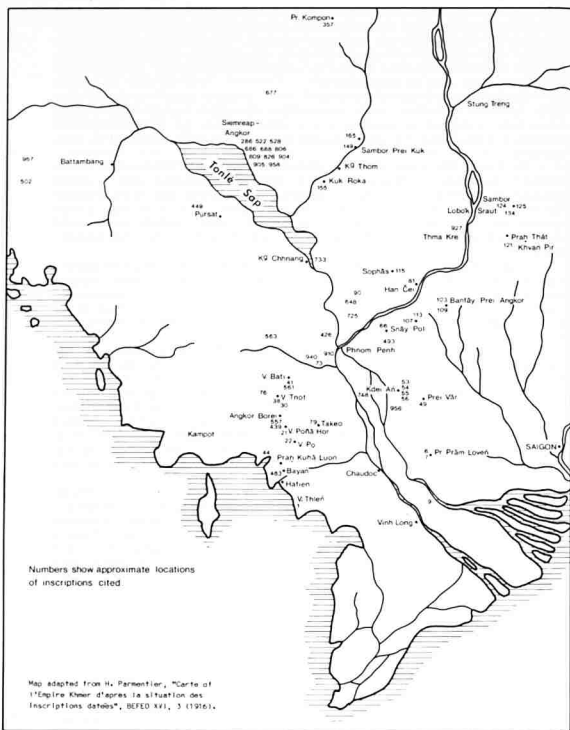
Some hints of the structures I have evoked here - a royal clan with ranked branches, and apparently irregular successions which sometimes suggest ultimogeniture - also appear in the Vietnamese evidence presented by John Whitmore in his contribution to this volume.

In Burma the lower ranking Shan and Mon chiefs were called 'elder brother' by their Burmese 'younger brother' overlord; and I would suggest that the Burmese legend of Aniruddha killing his elder brother "in fair combat for the throne" was devised in a later age which considered that "Sokkate being the elder had prior rights", in order to explain an instance of ultimogeniture which was no longer understood.[48]

Students who have remarked on the instances of 'irregular' accession to the throne at Angkor held European, and later Asian, primogeniture, explicitly or implicitly, to be normal; and the "charismatic 'mavericks'" who gained the Burmese throne may also be victims of an ethnocentric or anachronistic assumption about a 'normality' which was not in fact the normal pattern of the time.[49]

In eleventh-century Vietnam "almost all the successions of the Lý dynasty had some problems attached to them", at least in the eyes of Chinese or Western observers or commentators. For "the Vietnamese government [in contrast to the Chinese] was organized around the royal clan ... [which was] divided between those in a direct line to the throne ... and those in an indirect line", or in another description, there was differentiation "between the immediate royal clan ... and the branch clans which had more distant claims to the throne". Even "courtiers were attached to the royal clan", which may in fact indicate that they were of distant clan branches.[50]

Closer attention to the earlier historical periods may reveal elements of a common Southeast Asian social and political structure which has been obscured by the very different types of records preserved in the different polities, by the adoption of Indic and Sinic facades which concealed the underlying non-Indic and non-Sinic similarities, and by the imposition of assumptions drawn from the practices of other times and places.

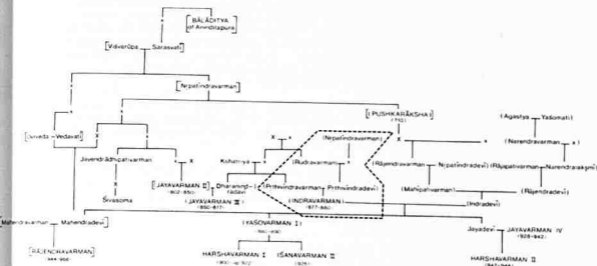


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 K9 Thom  
 K9 Roka 155  
 Sambor Prei Kuk 165  
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 Stung Treng  
 Sambor 124 125  
 Sraul 134  
 Lobok  
 Thma Krie 927  
 \*Prak Thát 121  
 Khvan Pr  
 K9 Chhnang 733  
 Sophās 115  
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 Han Cei 81  
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 103 Banāy Prei Angkor  
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 Phnom Penh 940  
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 V. Bat 41  
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 V. Thot 38  
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 Angkor Borei 557  
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 21 V. Poā Hor  
 27 V. Po  
 79 Takko  
 44  
 Prak Kuhā Luon  
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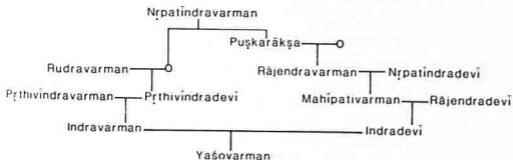


GENEALOGICAL TABLES

I. Genealogies of Indravarman, Yaśovarman, Rajendrarvarman as depicted in Coedes, The Indianized States of Southeast Asia.



Remarks: Indravarman's genealogy is encircled, Yaśovarman's indicated by parentheses, and Rajendrarvarman's by square brackets.



II. The above revised as discussed to show pyramiding with peak at Nṛpatīndrarvarman.

## NOTES

1. Pierre Dupont, 'Tchen-la et Panduranga', *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises* 24/1 (1949), 9-24, see p.16.
2. Claude Jacques, "'Funan", "Zhenla". The Reality Concealed by These Chinese Views of Indochina', *Early South East Asia. Essays in Archaeology, History, and Historical Geography*, ed. R.B. Smith and W. Watson, New York, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp.371-79; O.W. Wolters, 'North-Western Cambodia in the Seventh Century', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 37/2 (1974), 355-84, see p.355, n.1; O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982, 12-13.
3. This is not to say that indigenous separation into strata must always result in kingship. The point here is to emphasize that where kingship resulted, as in Cambodia, the first kings emerged from within local society.
4. Pierre Dupont, 'La dislocation du Tchen-la et la formation du Cambodge angkorien (VII-IX siècle)', *BEFEO* 43 (1943-46), 17-55, see pp.24, 25, 28, 34-35; and on Kaunḍinya in southern India, Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, The University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, 1967, 30, 53.
5. L.P. Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1951; P. Dupont, op.cit.; Sachchidanand Sahai, *Les institutions politiques et l'organisation administrative du Cambodge ancien*, Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 75, p.56, ch.4.
6. Claude Jacques (letter 1 Oct. 1984) has objected that the information from K.53, recording the career of the Āḍhyapura family, and K.54-55, naming a *poñ* Śivadatta and referring to a governor of Āḍhyapura, may not be combined as I have done because no name is common to them. All three texts are from the same place, Kdei An, near Ba Phnom, probably the Adhyapura mentioned in K.53 and K.55. K.53 names four generations of officials who served five kings from Rudravarman (514-550?) to Jayavarman I (657-681?), the last being Sīḥadatta who served successively Jayavarman I and the latter's uncle before being appointed governor of Āḍhyapura sometime before the inscription was set up in 668. K.54-55, although of different dates, are "inseparable one from the other" (Coedès, IC III, p.157, 'Inscriptions de Kdei An'). The first, dated 629, mentions in its Khmer part *poñ* Śivadatta as the source of the slaves, fields and orchards consecrated to the god by the inscription's author, Vidyavinaya. K.55, in Sanskrit, consists of a section contemporary with K.54, but without other significant information, and a second part from the reign of Jayavarman I which mentions a servant of the king whom the latter appointed governor of Āḍhyapura and whom Coedès considered "probably identical with Sīḥadatta" (ibid., 158) of K.53. It is thus quite legitimate to associate K.54-55 with K.53. It is not, of course, absolutely certain that Śivadatta (K.54) was of the same family, but it seems unlikely that any one not of that family could have disposed of the property listed in K.54 within what seems to have been the Āḍhyapura family's home territory. I therefore maintain that my inference is valid.
7. Inscriptions will be cited only by number; for full bibliography see Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge* (textes), VIII, Paris, Ecole

7. / (continued)  
Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1966, K.90, K.54-55, K.49, K.563, K.561, K.688, cited in order of discussion.
8. For **ge kloñ** see Coedès' explanation in K.904; and text of K.357 where the donor, **ge kloñ ta amcas** (**amcas** = 'lord', 'master', of either sex) seems to have been royal.
9. See particularly, K.30, K.76, K.56.
10. Coedès, **States**, 59.
11. See K.90.
12. See K.113, 698 AD, **poñ** son of **mratañ**; K.6 undated, **poñ** as hierarchical subordinate of **mratañ**.
13. Claude Jacques (letter 1 Oct. 1984) feels that my conclusions about the status of **poñ** and **mratañ** are not sufficiently firm, and he cites total occurrences of the relevant terms from a new index prepared in Japan which I have not yet seen. Jacques found 228 citations of **poñ** in the pre-Angkor period (and the term does not occur later) against 160 **mratañ**, a term continuing into the Angkor period, which seems to confirm my first inference about **poñ** as a pre-Angkor group displaced by **mratañ**. In the count of **travañ** Jacques found 21 associated with **poñ** against three with **mratañ**. I would agree that more study is required, but maintain that my inferences are valid, emphasizing that I found **poñ** associated with "ponds [**travañ**] and fields or other geographical-economic features", not just **travañ**. I would also like to emphasize that the pre-Angkor evidence will **never** support water-tight conclusions, and the most plausible inferences must be drawn and accepted as second best. Insistence on certainties will only hinder historical work.
14. K.939, K.1, K.38.
15. Although **Iśānavarman** may have been son of his predecessor, as the Chinese reported, there is no evidence for family connections among **Iśānavarman**, **Bhavavarman II**, and **Jayavarman I**, each of whom seems to have operated from a center of power in different regions.
16. **Bhavavarman II** inscriptions: K.79, K.21, K.439, K.483, K.733. The Hanchey inscription, K.81, has also been attributed to **Bhavavarman II**, which would indicate an extension of his realm, or a campaign, farther toward the northeast.
17. K.149.
18. K.79, K.49, K.66, K.493.
19. For **kpoñ** see K.557, K.79, K.910, K.107, K.790, K.940, K.904, K.38, K.155; and see David P. Chandler, 'Royally Sponsored Human Sacrifices in Nineteenth Century Cambodia: the cult of **nak ta Me Sa** (**Mahisasuramardini**) at Ba Phnom', *Journal of the Siam Society* 62/2 (July 1974), 207-22.
20. Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, Stockholm, Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1964, p.167, no 626e. Dr Christian Bauer, the only Mon scholar at the Canberra conference, did not think the **poñ-fan** relationship likely.

21. **Kurāḅ** contexts: K.1, K.9, K.22, K.38, K.54, K.73, K.109, K.493, K.502, K.561, K.648, K.927.
22. K.109; G. Coedès, 'La tradition généalogique des premiers rois d'Angkor d'après les inscriptions de Yaśovarman et de Rājendravarman', **BEFEO** 28 (1928), 127-31. I disagree with the view that Vyādhapura was 'capital' of Funan and located near Angkor Borei. The evidence will be presented in a later publication.
23. K.493.
24. K.725. See Coedès' remark on **agrāsana** in K.904.
25. Examples of younger son or younger cousin succession or ultimogeniture are: the younger brother (whether or not to be identified as Gunavarman) from whom Rudravarman of Funan usurped the throne; Harsavarman before Rājendravarman; Udayādityavarman I rather than his elder brother; and the sequence Yuvarāja - Jayavarman VI - Dharanindravarman I. As we shall see below in the discussion of Rājendravarman's genealogy, younger lineage branches may have outranked older ones.
26. Dupont, 'La dislocation'; the Śāmbhupura royal family is recorded in K.124 of 803 AD.
27. For the genealogies see Dupont, 'La dislocation'; and for the two categories of evidence n.1, above.
28. Pushkarāksha of the genealogies, Pushkara of K.121, 716 AD.
29. Dupont, 'La dislocation', 47, 50.
30. Dupont, *ibid.*, p.35.
31. Claude Jacques, **EEC** VIII, 'La carrière de Jayavarman II', **BEFEO** 59 (1972), 205-20; K.103, 770 AD, from Banteay Prey Nokor; K.134, 781 AD, 40 km northeast of Kratie.
32. See K.125, and K.124, p.171, n.2.
33. K.809.
34. Dupont, 'La dislocation', p.33.
35. Coedès, **Inscriptions du Cambodge**, VII, 128-34.
36. Coedès' emendation of the text in his translation, to say that Loñ Haradhārma brought them, is unjustified.
37. Claude Jacques, 'Nouvelles orientations pour l'étude de l'histoire du pays Khmer', **Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien**, vol.XIII, 1-4, Cambodge I, p.48.
38. In pre-Angkor times **'varman'** denoted kings exclusively, but by the tenth century **-varman** titles were also given to other dignitaries.
39. See K.826, and K.124.
40. See genealogical tables.
41. K.677, K.957.

42. K.958, K.286, K.686, K.905, K.522, K.806, K.528.
43. K.826.
44. K.165, K.449. 'La stèle de Palha'. Coedès recognized these identifications.
45. Paul Kirchhoff, 'The Principles of Clanship in Human Society', **Readings in Anthropology II Cultural Anthropology**, ed. Morton H. Fried, New York, Thoms Y. Crowell Company, 1959, pp.259-70, see p.267. Further discussion of the possibilities of clan organization in state formation is in Jonathan Friedman, **System, Structure and Contradiction, The Evolution of Asiatic Social Formations**, 1979, Copenhagen. Some anthropologist colleagues have objected that 'clan' may not be used as I have used it in the present discussion. Other anthropologists of my acquaintance affirm to the contrary that 'conical clan' is a perfectly valid anthropological concept; and certainly both Kirchhoff and Friedman are licensed practitioners of the discipline. There is clearly here a controversy among anthropologists in which I shall not attempt to intervene; and I shall continue to use 'conical clan' for the structure identified by Kirchhoff and Friedman regardless of its status as 'clan' for the anthropological brotherhood.
46. See my 'The Reign of Sūryavarman I and the Dynamics of Angkorean Development', The Eighth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Kuala Lumpur, August 1980 (unpublished); and a revised version, 'The Reign of Sūryavarman I and Royal Factions at Angkor', forthcoming in **Journal of Southeast Asian Studies**.
47. On the evidence for Aninditapura see Claude Jacques, *Études d'Épigraphie Cambodgienne VII, 'Sur l'emplacement du royaume d'Aninditapura'*, **BEFEO** 59 (1977), 193-205. Obviously Jacques' conclusions differ from my suggestion here, and I would not present my conclusion as definitive. The question requires further study, and I would not contest that by the time of Yaśovarman, when Aninditapura is first mentioned, some place had been designated as origin of the Aninditapura lineage.
48. Aung-Thwin, unpublished paper.
49. Ibid.
50. See Whitmore, below, pp.125, 122, 123, 122.

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# 6

## "Elephants Can Actually Swim": Contemporary Chinese Views of Late Ly Dai Viet

John K. Whitmore

A major confusion that exists in general writing on Vietnamese history concerns the nature of state and society in the Lý period (1010-1225). The assumption is often made that the millenium of Chinese domination (usually seen as dating from 111 B.C. to A.D. 939) had such a profound effect on the Vietnamese that all aspects of their civilization must be seen in a Chinese light. We would thus expect to find in Vietnam a bureaucratized, Confucian state with a strong central control and a people organized in patrilineal and strongly patriarchal clans. In this same way, we would also expect to see a major "faultline" (in the term used at this conference) existing between Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia, a cultural break so complete that the peoples on both sides of the line would have almost nothing in common with each other and be culturally, if not racially, antagonistic.

Yet evidence from both within Vietnam and without may lead the historian who studies Vietnam in the first centuries of its independence to a differing conclusion. By approaching the Vietnamese of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in a manner similar to the study of other parts of Southeast Asia at the same time, the historian can gain a better sense of the relative closeness or distance between Đại Việt and its contemporary Southeast Asian kingdoms. Keith W. Taylor elsewhere in this volume uses Vietnamese sources to look at the eleventh century and the establishment of Lý power; here I use contemporary Chinese sources in combination with Vietnamese materials to take a glance at the late twelfth century and the decline of the Lý.

In addition, the work of O.W. Wolters is of great value to this study in three specific ways. First, his use of Chinese sources for the study of Southeast Asian history demonstrates how such external information may help to provide a pattern for the study of individual Southeast Asian peoples. Second, his study of the nature of early Southeast Asian leadership points the way for our examination of indigenous political events. And, most specifically, his work on the Trần period and its view of the preceding Lý has provided a critical ingredient for the study of the end of the Lý and the beginning of the Trần.

Wolters' major use of Chinese sources is well known. His integration of foreign and indigenous detail demonstrated the approach necessary for the reconstruction of local Southeast Asian history, where

possible. Most recently, he has published an article pointing to the possibility of finding valuable information on internal Southeast Asian situations scattered about in Chinese "notebooks" (*pi-chi*).[1] These random "jottings" are likely to contain data of great interest when placed within the historical context as we now know it. Once dug out of the Chinese texts, such information with its observation of Southeast Asian life of the time will greatly enhance our developing knowledge of the political, social, economic and cultural patterns within Southeast Asia. For certain periods in Vietnamese history, the late Lý being one and the Mạc era of the sixteenth century being another, such material is of great importance for our interpretation.

Another direction in which Wolters' work has taken him is the analysis of leadership on the early Southeast Asian political scene. The non-structured nature of such political activities required strong personal qualities of leadership and the demonstration of exceptional individual abilities. The charisma of such individuals showed their link to supernatural powers and their sharing of qualities considered extramundane. Successors of such exceptional individuals attempted to maintain such status through ritual contacts and the ceremonial binding of followers to them. For Wolters, prowess formed a central ingredient in achieving overlordship.[2] Special qualities and accomplishments, particularly in warfare, set a leader off and insured followers in his wake. Personal achievement, not unlike success in headhunting, brought glory, both secular and sacred, momentum, and an aura of continuing success. Individuals would flock to serve and devote themselves to such a personage. Physical and spiritual power were thus strongly intertwined. Success meant *śakti* and *śakti* meant more success.

Such successful leaders sought to link themselves directly to spiritual powers. In seventh-century Cambodia, this took the form of a cult to Siva which eventually led to the *devaraja* cult. As Ian Mabbett and Hermann Kulke have shown,[3] the ruler was thus seen to be "like a god". With such demonstrated efficacy and sharing in the Hindu-Buddhist cosmos, such a leader drew to himself powerful families and took wives from them. All followers gained both earthly and spiritual benefits as they supported this man of prowess. Once he left the scene, his successors sought to keep his position by maintaining the ritual which had linked him to the spiritual powers. Individual prowess became religious acts through which later leaders took on the accomplishments of their forebear.

Concerning specifically Vietnam and the late Lý period, Wolters has helped set both the historical and the historiographical contexts for our understanding of these unexamined years. His studies of the late thirteenth-century Vietnamese historian Lê Văn Hưu have shown the concerns of the early Trần dynasty and its view of the Lý in the previous century.[4] A prime worry for the Trần and a weak point (in their view) of the Lý was succession to the throne. Picking up on his theme of Southeast Asian leadership noted above, Wolters pointed to "the heroic quality of the individual" which drew followers, achieved overlordship and linked itself to supernatural power.[5] A network of families interlocked with the leader by marriage provided support for his efforts, but meant competing factions upon his death. Eventually, with the establishment and growth of the Lý court, those in royal service also came to have a hand in succession disputes as well. In



addition, the scholars of the eleventh and twelfth centuries did not, in the Trần eyes, act to establish the Lý court as it ought to have been established. The Trần themselves took advantage of such weaknesses and acted to resolve them in the thirteenth century.

We may now turn to the late Lý period, particularly the second half of the twelfth century. Taylor's work sets the foundation for the study of the Lý, and Wolters has begun the study of the Trần and their activities in the thirteenth century. I first examine some contemporary Chinese sources of the sort discussed above which bear directly on the state immediately to the south. I then look at the significant Chinese details in conjunction with the Vietnamese records in order to discuss the nature of Đại Việt in these years.

### 1. Chinese Reports

Two rather long statements on Vietnam exist from the last quarter of the twelfth century and one short one from the first quarter of the thirteenth, all three falling under the general classification *pi-chi*. Fan Shih-hu's *Kuei Hai Yu Heng Chih* (1170s) is not completely extant, but a long section of it is included in Ma Tuan-lin's chapter on "Chiao-chih" from his late thirteenth-century encyclopedic work, *Wen Hsien T'ung K'ao*. Fan's work is referred to by Chou Ch'u-fei in the latter's *Ling Wai Tai Ta* (1178) which has a long section on "An-nan Kuo". Finally, Chao Ju-kua's *Chu Fan Chih* (1225) has a short section on "Chiao-chih".[6] The writings from the 1170s are both offered from the vantage point of Kuangsi province, just north of the Vietnam border. Fan Shih-hu (also known as Fan Ch'eng-ta) was named High Commissioner for Kuei-lin early in 1174, while Chou Ch'u-fei served as Assistant Sub-prefect under Fan and another official in the mid-1170s (ca. 1172-1178). Chao Ju-kua offers a coastal view rather than an inland one from his post as Superintendent of Maritime Trade in Fu-chien province at Ch'u'an-chou on the southeast coast of China.[7]

Let us start with Fan Shih-hu's report and then make comparative comments based on that of Chou Ch'u-fei which cites Fan's work. We shall also see what Chao Ju-kua's somewhat different perspective and later time adds to the discussion.

One major point to be made from the late twelfth-century reports, duly noted by Fan, is the contrast between contemporary Vietnam and the Vietnam reported by the early Sung ambassador of almost two centuries before. Sung Hao had informed his emperor (Sung Tai-tsung) in 990 that the Vietnamese were *hua-oi* "beyond civilization" (and Fan concurred). The Vietnamese capital had been outside the Red River delta at Hoa-lu, essentially the armed camp of the local warlord Lê Hoàn. Hoàn had taken the title Đế "Emperor", tattooed the phrase *Thiên-tử-binh* "Army of the Son of Heaven" on the foreheads of his troops, and used Chinese names and titles for his court, but was (in Chinese eyes) much too close to his followers.[8] The Vietnamese polity, as reflected in Sung's report, was based on personal loyalty to a dominant leader. The soldiers with their tattoos and faithful courtiers surrounded a ruler who sought to raise himself to the level of the Chinese emperor. Kinship and personal favor were the bases for selection of officers, with all the instability inherent therein. Punishment was severe for the slightest error. Martial display took on a major role, and all men were ultimately part of the armed forces. Sung Hao portrayed such activity as mere vanity;

for the Vietnamese, it was a most necessary element in a polity based on a combination of indigenous beliefs, military power and Chinese overlay.

The impact of Sung's impressions remained with the Chinese for eighty years. In the 1070s, the Sung dynasty had still maintained the underdeveloped image of the Vietnamese and had had to alter it when the Vietnamese demonstrated an efficient military capacity during the fighting of that decade. Fan Shih-hu observed that while the Vietnamese had most definitely been *hoa-oi*, with the shock of their advanced power in the warfare of the 1070s (despite Fan's protestations of victory) he judged Đại Việt to be currently "the most powerful of all the southern barbarians".[9] Though Fan showed only a bare awareness of the bloody struggle, conflicts during the twelfth century on the eastern mainland among the Khmer, the Chams and the Vietnamese led the latter to seek the assurance of stability in their rear. (Fan's one mention was of territory valuable for aromatic woods which the Vietnamese had taken from the Khmer.)[10] The China with which the Vietnamese were seeking good relations now lay much closer to them than ever before, with the Southern Sung capital in the lower Yangtze valley after 1126. Wolters has noted how the Lý king "mounted a number of lavish missions in order to improve his status in the Chinese court, and in 1174 his efforts were rewarded by the bestowal of the title 'King of An-nan'".[11]

These efforts led to a flurry of diplomatic activity between Vietnam and China. Initially, the Vietnamese sought contact and were rebuffed, only to have the Chinese ask for elephants (to be used for the great sacrifice to Heaven). This time it was the Vietnamese who resolutely refused, being reluctant to let the animals go. In 1174, just as Fan was taking over his duties in Kuangsi, the Vietnamese again tried to make contact, while still refusing to send the elephants. With both sides adamant, Fan himself helped resolve the situation - the Chinese agreed to accept the full Vietnamese tribute and the Vietnamese brought fifteen elephants, all bedecked (for an illustration of such, see Guy in this volume). The Vietnamese ruler in turn was declared to be **An Nan Kuo Wang** "King of the State of An-nan". However, as this entire procedure was taking place, another complication occurred. The Vietnamese ruler (Lý Anh-tông) died, and the Prime Minister Tô Hiến Thành placed his successor (Lý Cao-tông) on the throne. The Vietnamese then proceeded to accept the Chinese recognition without mentioning that the old king was deceased. The situation was finally resolved, however, and the Chinese sent both their condolences and the official bestowal of the new title on the new ruler. Throughout the entire time, a number of embassies, both Vietnamese and Chinese, moved through Kuei-lin on their way to the other's capital. Both Fan and Chou served there at the time, and it is from their contacts with the embassies going and coming that their information comes. Each official has something to offer as an independent observer. [12]

According to Fan (and as we shall see below), the Vietnamese used the title **An Nan Tu Hu Fu** (Viet. **An Nam Đô Hộ Phủ**) "Protectorate of An-nan". Fan himself made special note of the fact that he was able to take advantage of the title by receiving the Vietnamese envoys as a group of lower Chinese officials, equal to his own junior officials, rather than as members of a tributary embassy. The Vietnamese, needing the Chinese contact, complied and offered no complaint. In addition, where the official seal of Đại Việt had read **Nam Việt Quốc Âm** "Seal of

the State of Nan Yueh", Fan tells us that it had "recently" been changed to **Chung Shu Men Hsia Chih Yin** "Seal of the [Chinese] Secretariat and Chancellery". This change may have occurred as a result of the new title just received (and only for the benefit of the Chinese?). **Nan-yueh** was undoubtedly a term which disturbed the Chinese court. On their side, according to Fan, the Chinese did not take issue with the Vietnamese use of Chinese titles due to the reluctance of the Chinese to upset relations with such a border state (Vietnam was, after all, the only state in Southeast Asia to maintain relations with the Southern Sung throughout the latter's existence).[13]

The diplomatic front thrown up by the Vietnamese before Fan and the Chinese seems to have been centered (as we will note below) in the **An-nam Đô Hộ Phủ** or Protectorate Office and involved some Chinese scholars, as an annoyed Fan pointed out. The Vietnamese diplomats undoubtedly consisted of a small group of courtiers and officials schooled in the Chinese classics, and this would help to explain Fan's statement that officials selected by examination were the most respected in the Vietnamese court. No evidence exists for such a statement in the Vietnamese records. Nevertheless, Fan is certainly correct in listing the items the Vietnamese had brought from China - the literacy, palace names, official titles, as well as other things like paper and writing brushes. In this way Fan attempted to show the Vietnamese dependence on Chinese goods and immigrants, both voluntary and forced, for the foundation of their civilization. Indeed, he even went so far as to claim that a majority of the population of Vietnam had come from China. In making his case that the Sung should try harder to maintain and not ignore their tight restrictions on slave trafficking and the foreign employ of Chinese literati, Fan sensationalized his presentation as he tried to bring the problem (and himself) to the attention of his emperor. In Fan's view, the territory of Min (Fu-chien) supplied the necessary brains for the operation of the Vietnamese state. While he turns out to have been prophetic, given the rise of the Trần in the following century, Fan even makes the statement, "according to tradition", that it was the home of the dynastic founder, **Lý Công Uẩn**. [14]

A major point being implicitly made by Fan was that Vietnam was a point of connection between "infamous traffickers from the southern part of the empire" and "foreign merchants belonging to barbarian lands". Fan charges the two sets of traders with complicity in shipping both human beings and Sung copper cash overseas, in addition to the regular commerce. The Vietnamese, he noted, used the copper cash for their currency, not making their own (not knowing how, he says). The goods of the country included metals from their own mines (gold, silver, copper), pearls, and animal products (from elephants, rhinoceroses, kingfishers) as the most valuable of a number of items, and the Vietnamese were in contact with "all the southern barbarians (**Man**) to the west of the Chinese ports". The closest of the Chinese ports was only a day away by sea.[15]

Yet behind the facade of real or imagined Chinese influence lay quite a different world, as Fan himself shows us. His work gives us much important detail about Vietnamese life. Đại Việt was, as Fan indicates, quite willing to supplement its manpower and human resources with additions from elsewhere, to treat newcomers well, and to use their expertise to settle relevant problems, particularly in the international

sphere (as in the composition of letters). Hence Fan's vivid allegations of extensive trade in human beings and of the reception of anyone able and interested in serving the Vietnamese throne (Confucian scholars, Buddhist monks and other religious figures, merchants, skilled artisans and their dependants) all have a ring of truth despite any exaggeration he may have given them. The system into which the Vietnamese welcomed these foreigners showed little correspondence to the bureaucratic pattern of Sung government. Despite their "false" use of Chinese official titles, especially those linked to the Protectorate (**Đô Hộ Phủ**), Fan specifically states that the Vietnamese did not use a bureaucratic ranking.[16]

The Vietnamese government instead was organized around the royal clan (**Vương-tông-tộc**) and the capital of Thăng-long. The royal clan was divided between those in a direct line to the throne (**thừa-tự**) and those in an indirect line (**chỉ-tự**). Especially favored courtiers were attached to the royal clan, presumably being given the royal name (Lý). Other courtiers were grouped together as the Company of the Heavenly King (**Thiên-vương-ban**). The officials were split between the "inner" **nội** and the "outer" **ngoại**, with the former "administering the people" and the latter "running the army". In the capital, there thus existed the ruling elite with their Chinese aristocratic titles headed by the Prime Minister **Phụ Quốc Thái Úy** and assisted by an assortment of administrative positions. The outer territories were handled by the military under the guidance of the top counsellor (**Khu-mật-sự**). In addition, the "outer" sphere included the office of the Protectorate (**Đô Hộ Phủ**) which had its own building in the royal compound, a tower. Men became officials in one of three ways - by examination (as noted above, the preferred way in Fan's eyes), by being the son of an official or by wealth. The latter means received more detailed description than the other two. The officials were provided with no cash salary as they were expected to live off the rice and fish obtained from the local populace. On the other hand, the Vietnamese troops (still wearing the tattoo "Army of the Son of Heaven" on their foreheads) received money, cloth and rice, even while they worked their fields in times of peace.[17]

Other information supplied by Fan shows the cultural context of the times for the Vietnamese. While his statement that the Vietnamese "had little comprehension of (Chinese classical) literature" was undoubtedly meant to be deprecating, it was in general most likely quite true. Vietnamese society was not a strong reflection of China's, and its indigenous patterns were still quite visible. Bamboo was everywhere, tattooing was prominent, both for soldiers and for "slaves", and betel chewing was certainly there. The Vietnamese ceremonies had a distinct orientation toward fertility rather than the ancestors (as Fan noted, the ceremonies "of the different seasons of the year make no offerings to the ancestors"). At the beginning of the year, the Vietnamese ruler (referred to by Fan as the **tu** or chief) slaughtered a buffalo, no doubt tied to a tall pole, and gave a feast for his courtiers. At mid-year, there was a great celebration during which the officials presented domestic animals to their ruler who in turn on the following day gave a feast for them. The palaces, carrying the "falsely arrogated titles" of Crystal (**Thủy-tinh-cung**) and Origin of Heaven (**Thiên-nguyên-điện**), were richly decorated with "dragons" (water spirits), cranes (with the power to keep serpents away), and heavenly nymphs.[18]

Among the ordinary people, all of whom put up their hair and went barefoot according to Fan, the standard fare was "Cham rice", *Chiêm-mễ*. This type was, to quote the modern historian Ho P'ing-ti, "an early ripening and relatively drought resistant rice from Champa" which had been introduced into China as well.[19] The favored rice, however, was called *Dai-hòa* and was saved for special occasions such as the New Year. The soldiers received a dish of it combined with fish paste (perhaps *nước mắm*, the fermented fish sauce of the Vietnamese). The people were not separated from their ruler by a layered bureaucratic structure. Anyone who wished to make an appeal to the throne concerning a complaint or judgement that required immediate attention could ring the great bell hanging at the gate to the royal palace. The punishments handed out, Fan tells us, were quite harsh.[20]

Chou Ch'u-fei incorporated much of his superior's information in his own account, and the two works not surprisingly overlap. Yet each in places has more detail than the other, showing that each stood in his own right as an observer. A detailed comparison of the two essays would be quite valuable. However, for now we shall compare only those segments of greatest value for studying Đại Việt itself. For Chou, Vietnam's arrogance began with Lý Thánh-tông in the mid-eleventh century when the Vietnamese ruler "falsely" bestowed posthumous titles on his ancestors, named the country Đại Việt, and took the reign title *Thiên-huống* "Heaven confers (this on us)". Yet, Chou tells us, however rustic the Vietnamese court may have appeared, the upper and lower levels got along rather well. Undoubtedly to his dismay, both the king's mother and his wife were called "Queen", and all his sons were potential heirs apparent (similar to Fan, but told in a different way). The Vietnamese differentiated between the immediate royal clan (called by Chou *Đại-vương*) and the branch clans which had more distant claims to the throne. But Chou explicitly states that "the eldest in the (royal) clan is called the heir apparent (*thừa-tự*)". Chou too notes the inner/outer, civil/military distinction without going into as much detail. He is more explicit on the nature of the Protectorate Office - it handled correspondence and relations with China. Like Fan, Chou notes the three means of joining the state administration, being the son of an official, being chosen for scholarship (without directly saying examinations), or possessing wealth. But elsewhere he too claimed examinations to be the major means of selecting officials. As for the provincial administrative organization, Chou listed what he called four prefectures (*phủ*), thirteen subprefectures (*châu*), and three stations (*trại*). His list is incomplete though, missing as it does some inland administrative units.[21]

In describing the life and times of the Vietnamese, Chou does not reach for the sensationalism of Fan (as for example with the slave trade). Where he utilizes the same information as Fan, Chou tends to follow the more matter-of-fact detail, rearranging it within his narrative. His description of food, clothing and decorative items generally follows Fan's. Yet Chou is quite capable of making independent observations, such as: "Elephants can actually swim" and "The tattooing on their bodies resembles the designs on the bronze drums".[22]

Chao Ju-kua wrote almost half a century later and his note on Chiao-chih draws from the Fan and Chou accounts. Thus, we hear (in shorthand) once again of the Vietnamese going barefoot, not using

medicines, needing to import Chinese paper and writing brushes and having two major festivals. "On New Year's day they pray to the Buddha, but they do not make presents to their ancestors". The Vietnamese products listed by Chao are the same as in Fan's report, but curiously enough Chao states that "this country does not participate in the foreign trade (of China)".[23]

## II. The Early Vietnamese State

As we examine these Chinese *pi-chi* in our study of late Lý Vietnam, we need to keep in mind what we know of the early Vietnamese and integrate elements of the Chinese notes into our understanding. I shall start with a key element in Vietnamese civilization which still requires further investigation, social structure, and then using Wolters' thought on Southeast Asian leadership look at religious elements in Vietnamese kingship to see how Vietnamese society and kingship were interrelated. From there, I shall examine Vietnamese administrative organization and finally economic life as it related to the state. I shall conclude with some comments on how these points relate to the dynastic change which took place a half century later. In the process, I shall utilize the major indigenous historical texts on the times, both from the following Trần dynasty: Lê Văn Hưu's *Đại Việt Sử Ký* and the (Đại) *Việt Sử Lược*. [24]

### A. Social structure

In another paper I have discussed the pattern of Vietnamese social organization for a later period.[25] Using the very informative work of Yu Insun,[26] it becomes quite apparent that earlier Vietnamese society was not patrilineal in the Chinese sense. Only with the Lê dynasty of the fifteenth century and after was there an official emphasis by the central government for the people at large on patrilineality and primogeniture. An analysis of earlier Vietnamese social organization requires, to my mind, a sense of social structure elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

As Wolters notes, lowland Southeast Asian society was generally cognatic with the consequent necessity of voluntary group formation. Cooperative effort and creative leadership were important elements in social organization. The Balinese studies of Clifford and Hildred Geertz and James Boon, the Burmese work of Melford Spiro, and the Thai research of Jeremy Kemp bring out the optional nature of social relationships in these societies.[27] The broad kindred encompassing both paternal and maternal lines meant choice instead of requirement in kin relations (and beyond). Thus, a key word in describing such relationships is flexibility, particularly in terms of group formation.

A. Thomas Kirsch has pointed out the significance of bilateral relations for early Southeast Asian polities, and Wolters applied Kirsch's discussion to mid-Lý Vietnam in the same volume.[28] The main point was that pretenders to power needed allies: intermarriage with families of other powerful leaders helped attain this. Yet all offspring of such marriages had claims to the throne, and their maternal grandparents were quite willing to wade into the fray in order to strengthen that claim.

In this volume, Vickery indicates the response to this problem

by early Angkor. The Khmer developed the pattern of a conical clan (not patrilineal but "ambilateral") in order to regulate the succession, a pattern with much potential instability. In Đại Việt, as Wolters pointed out in the discussion at the conference,[29] the choice was one of "dynasty", applying a patrilineal scheme to royal succession. The result, in his view, was that it controlled the royal women and their families, maintained a sense of the past in the court, and provided a continuity of service therein. This concept started under the Lý and only reached full force with their successors, the Trần, who recognized the problems in the Lý approach to succession.[30]

Let us look first at Keith Taylor's comments on Vietnamese social structure before the Lý and during the period of Chinese domination.[31] He sees therein a society with a bilateral nature and flexible tendencies. Mythic outlines in the Lạc period over a thousand years before indicate that there were a relatively high position for women in Vietnamese society and "a bilateral family system in which inheritance rights could be passed through both maternal and paternal lines". Later historical events confirm such a pattern, and the Chinese were ultimately frustrated in their efforts to make Vietnamese society over in their own image. Wolters shows how, as a result of the flexibility inherent in Vietnamese social structure, almost all the successions of the Lý dynasty had some problems attached to them. There was no primogeniture or any set form of succession to the throne. The result was that all elements in and around the court could attempt to share in the choice of the new ruler. The flexibility thus helped bring disorder and danger to the court and, to some degree, the state itself.

What do the above *pi-chi* tell us about Vietnamese social structure and particularly the organization of the court and the state? Both Fan and Chou indicate the openness of the succession to all the sons of the king, though Chou also speaks of "the eldest of the royal clan" being the heir apparent. He indicates as well the equality of Queen Mother and Queen, and hence of the potential of their respective families to involve themselves around the throne. Other branches of the royal family also had access to the throne. This would confirm the picture of succession drawn by Wolters from the Vietnamese sources.

Another point made by Fan was that privileged members of the aristocracy would be drawn into the royal clan (and perhaps given the royal name). To me, this represents both the fluidity of kin relations in Vietnam and the use of fictive kin relations to strengthen group formation and political alliances. This is a pattern that would continue in later centuries (as witness the bestowal of the Lê name on loyal followers in the fifteenth century until Lê Thánh-tông brought in Confucian objections to such a practice).

## B. Ritual

The fluidity of Southeast Asian and Vietnamese social organization required, in Wolters' terms (as noted earlier), "an acknowledgement of the heroic quality of an individual".[32] This inspired loyalty which helped form groups and the political power these entailed. However, once a powerful individual had gained the throne and established his family thereon, the problem of royal succession emerged as Wolters has described. Ritual had to be developed which would continue the special heroic qualities of the ruler, particularly as it concerned perceived

links with the supernatural. This need tied in with the need of the central power to establish itself over the local powers and their cults. The answer, I would argue, for Vietnam as for other classical states of Southeast Asia was the cosmic umbrella of Hindu-Buddhist thought and a strong eclecticism in their approach to foreign ideas.[33]

More specifically, of importance here was the role of Indra, King of Heaven/the Gods, allowing the parallelism between microcosmos and macrocosmos, king and god, maintaining social order, and bringing prosperity and fertility to the land. Michael Aung Thwin and Eleanor Mannikka have shown the major significance of Indra for Pagan and Angkor respectively.[34] In both cases, the nature of kingship had a strong link to Indra in symbol and ritual, most notably in the **abhiseka** ceremony. Indra also existed in Thăng-long, capital of Đại Việt, in the form of **Đế-thích** (the **Ti-shih** of China). Established in 1057 by Lý Thánh-tông, the ritual concerning this figure continued through the Lý and Trần dynasties, only to be displaced during the rise of the Confucian state in the fifteenth century; yet it reappeared briefly in 1516 with the attempt to resurrect the Trần dynasty, an apparent local reaction to the adoption of the Chinese model.[35]

Linked to and scattered around the name of **Đế-thích** in the Vietnamese historical texts (and the **pi-chi** as well) is frequent mention of the word **Thiên** "Heaven", used in the nomenclature of reigns, rituals, temples and places. This term is Chinese and is usually seen in Vietnam as relating to the impersonal Confucian Heaven with its strong moral overtones. Yet in the earlier centuries I suspect that **Thiên** relates more to the Hindu-Buddhist Heaven than to the Confucian moral one. Vietnam must be, I am arguing here, considered within a Southeast Asian context on this issue. The existence in Đại Việt of a Hindu-Buddhist royal cult of Indra, the Heavenly King, links the earthly king to the celestial and creates a positive and reinforcing relationship between monarchy and populace. In this manner would the successors to the dynastic founder be able both to maintain the heroic image he set and to establish a royal cult overarching the local cults.

Fan notes one fact of particular significance for this argument. Members of the Vietnamese aristocracy were brought into the royal clan and/or into the Company of the King of Heaven (**Thiên-vương-ban**). I interpret this "company" to have been a distinguished group of Vietnamese courtiers who participated in the ritual surrounding the cult of **Đế-thích**. By doing so, they would have maintained the central existence of dynastic continuity and upheld the heroic image/cosmic configuration of the Vietnamese ruler. The Vietnamese historical records show the activities of this cult through the twelfth century. Both Lê Văn Hưu's **Đại Việt Sử Ký** and the (Đại) **Việt Sử Lược** record the 1057 founding of the cults to **Đế-thích** (Indra) and **Phạm-vương** (Brahma) in the **Thiên-phúc** and **Thiên-thọ** temples. The images of the two deities were cast in gold. The **Đại Việt Sử Ký** then notes a visit of the king to the image of **Đế-thích** alone in 1134 (linked to the establishment of the **Thiên-ninh** and **Thiên-thành** temples), while the (Đại) **Việt Sử Lược** recorded the gilding of the two images and the placing of them in the two temples of **Thiên-phù** and **Thiên-hựu** in 1158 and again in 1194.[36] Lê Tắc would record (in his **An-nam Chí-lược** of the early fourteenth century) that the ritual involving **Đế-thích** took place two days before the New Year's.[37]

Another ritual of more down-to-earth significance for the



Vietnamese was the oath of allegiance. Begun in 1028 with the first Lý succession, it would continue through the Lý and Trần dynasties into the Lê before being displaced by the Nam-giao sacrifice to the Confucian Heaven.[38] As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese oath involved imbibing a sacralized liquid, here the blood of a sacrificial animal, and calling upon the spirit(s) to destroy them if they should prove to be disloyal. The Vietnamese oath was taken to the Spirit of the Mountain of the Bronze Drum. We see the oath of allegiance taken in twelfth-century Đại Việt at times of dynastic succession, in 1128, 1137 and 1175. Later, in the tumultuous last years of the dynasty, the oath appeared twice in 1214 and then in 1225 when the Lý princess took the throne.[39] During the Trần dynasty, the oath ceremony was held regularly on the fourth day of the fourth month, and it is possible that the oath formed an annual rite in the Lý court as well. Fan and Chou both note the major celebration after the New Year (the fourth day of the first month) at which the Lý ruler had a buffalo slaughtered and gave a feast for his ministers. This could have been the occasion for taking such a blood oath.

### C. Administration

The form of the state that emerged in the Red River delta with the Lý dynasty was eclectic, elitist and non-bureaucratic in a pattern similar to those of the other great Southeast Asian states of the classical age. In all these states, the major focus of activity was in the central base around the capital, that area which served as the foundation of the ruling family. Here were concentrated the power and the resources, economic, religious and intellectual, controlled by the state with trusted lieutenants in charge. Religious establishments and their estates seem to have formed a key part of this area. The state, then, was centralized in the sense that as much as possible of what the state controlled tended to be brought into this core area.

De Casparis, Jacques, Vickery and Kulke in this volume have shown the nature of administration in the classical state of Southeast Asia, of the relations between capital and countryside therein. Focussing mainly on Cambodia and Java, these essays show us how, from the seventh century on, polities gradually coalesced until ca. A.D. 1000 they formed (in Kulke's words) an "imperial phase of state formation in Southeast Asia". Operating from a strengthened core area, the rulers of such polities either placed kin and favored lieutenants in charge of outer areas or invested local leaders in their existing positions. As Wolters has noted, "Administrative power ... depended on the management of personal relationships ...".[40] Such individuals could act with relative autonomy as long as they took part in the ritual of the court (such as the oath) and furnished resources to the capital. The village communities scattered about the countryside stayed within their own frames of reference except in times of emergency or of specific royal demands. Only then would they interact with the central power. Otherwise they sent some of their resources to the local lord, who in turn forwarded a share as tribute to the throne. In Đại Việt, there was a similar pattern. Taylor in this volume utilizes the work of Yumio Sakurai to demonstrate that the Lý controlled the core area directly and the outer area indirectly and that the polity which existed was "a system of regional powers grouped under the Lý royal umbrella". As

Taylor demonstrates so well, the Vietnamese ruler integrated the realm through personal contact with both the human and the supernatural beings of the varied localities.

Kulke also notes the use of religious institutions (temples) as a key element in the integration of the expanded core area. We know that many temples were built in the region around Thăng-long during the early Lý. Kulke's description would seem to fit Đại Việt, but more specific work needs to be done on this topic in the Vietnamese sources.

Wolters has pointed out the **mandala** nature of politics in Southeast Asia,[41] and we should apply this concept to Vietnam as well. The many circles of local political power lay both within and outside the larger circle of a great capital's political influence. Hence, as Wolters and Taylor (in this volume) note, there was little distinction between domestic and foreign relations. Both situations required the personal contacts noted above. Such relations also meant "non-exclusive" approaches (to use Taylor's term) irrespective of what we might see as ethnicity or ideology. This cultural relativity meant that what counted was not what people were or believed, but rather what power relations existed among them, and in a world of **mandalas** these power relations were constantly shifting. For Đại Việt, this involved positive relations with other peoples and their cultures and an uneasiness concerning the attraction of other power centers for the people in their own outer areas. Taylor points out the need to attack rival capitals in order to keep control over one's own sphere of influence.

The elite which ruled the Vietnamese state carried titles of the T'ang aristocracy. Living in the capital region, these courtiers added to its might and glory, thereby contributing both to the cultural magnetism which attracted outlying principalities and to the power which controlled them. As Fan noted, a bureaucracy in the Chinese sense was non-existent, though titles of various Chinese offices might be employed, and, despite Fan's and Chou's insistence, little evidence exists for the importance of examinations in the selection of officials. According to a nineteenth-century Vietnamese scholar, the Lý selection procedures were personal choice, inheritance by sons, and selling office, in that order.[42] The gradual emergence of Chinese ceremonial activity helped raise the status and mystique of the Vietnamese throne and its capital throughout its loosely held territories. Much as in the "Indianized" states, with their **devarajas** and **purohitas**, the state of Đại Việt and its rulers utilized a foreign pattern of rule to enhance their status in the realm.

The emphasis of the Chinese **pi-chi** on the civil/military, inner/outer dichotomy reflected the division between the capital region and the local areas. Civil officials were in charge of the central area, the foreign specialists so remarked upon by Fan (but not by Chou) would have served here, and the Prime Minister (**Phụ Quốc Thái Úy**) was the central figure therein. During the 1170s, the latter was Tô Hiến Thành, a former soldier who has gone down in Vietnamese history with some praise from later scholars for his steadfastness. This was because he engineered the succession of Lý Cao-tông to the Vietnamese throne in accordance with the proprieties of the sinic world - the heir apparent took the throne (despite pressure and bribes to the contrary from the Queen), honored his mother, waited until the New Year to set up his own reign period, and declared a three-year period of mourning.

Such a pattern had not really been established before, and the reason for it most likely lies in the diplomatic problems with China mentioned above. Tô Hiến Thành in all probability was sure to arrange it so.[43]

The military, on the other hand, acted to keep the local chiefs in line and to maintain a defense against outside threats - in these years, hill peoples, Chams, and Khmer, not to mention Chinese. Local warriors and their elephants, as illustrated on their ceramics, would join the king's forces (note Taylor's mention of "six armies") in a manner not unlike local Malay chiefs and their ships.[44] Basically, the further from the center the less control there was. Perpetually a problem for the Southeast Asian ruler, he had to bring these outer areas into some form of submission to him. Cultural and supernatural awe were used as much as brute force, and this was one purpose for such activities as the blood oath and the royal cult. To hold the territory beyond the capital region, the Lý rulers had slowly developed a system of administration. Putting aside the handing over of territorial segments to local individuals, the Lý had, by the late twelfth century, set up an administrative center (**phủ**) in each of five major regions of the state: the "Protectorate" (**Đô Hộ Phủ**) in the center and east, **Bắc-giang** to the north and east, **Phủ-lương** to the north and west, **Đại-thông** to the west and south and **Thanh-hóa** in what was then the distant south. All but the first, in Henri Maspero's reconstruction, faced the hills and dealt with a particular tribal group.[45] Chou noted four of the five **phủ**, leaving out only **Bắc-giang**. The governors of these outer territories, notably **Thanh-hóa** in the south, were undoubtedly autonomous in their action as long as they met their general obligations of loyalty and resource supply. Sitting in the populated areas of the Red River delta, mainly north and west of the capital region, the three governors of **Bắc-giang**, **Phủ-lương** and **Đại-thông** acted to defend the center from rebel chieftains and invasions and to provide a certain amount of manpower and revenue for it.[46]

Fan and Chou indicate that officials did not receive a salary controlled by the capital, but were entirely dependent upon local resources, a region's fish and rice. The soldiers did receive some largesse at the same time as they were expected to do some farming of their own.

#### D. Economic life

The demographic and ecological development of the Vietnamese moved from the higher, hillier area of the Red River valley adjacent to the mountains and north and west of the capital east and south into the true deltaic region. As Vallibhotama and Stargardt describe elsewhere in this volume, the fringes of the great river valleys were settled before people began to penetrate the more treacherous deltaic environment. Gradually, over the centuries, wet rice cultivation moved ever deeper into this watery domain. It would appear that each locality worked out its own hydraulic system, presumably sufficient to allow such cultivation to take place as Stargardt notes for elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Though difficult to describe in any detail, the evidence from village cults in Vietnam points to this movement south and east during the eleventh and twelfth centuries and into the thirteenth, while the lack of official records relating any widespread hydraulic work would indicate the local initiative here also.[47] The opening and holding of

land in this process (by both individuals and temples; see Jacques in this volume) is a subject that requires close study.

The Chinese writers of the late twelfth century naturally point to the staples of Vietnamese life, rice and fish, as forming the economic base. They indicate that a special early ripening strain of rice had come into Vietnam from Champa to supply much of the Vietnamese food, while an indigenous type remained of greater preference. Local production flourished, as may be seen in the ceramics (Guy in this volume). The central government in Thăng-long would not have had the power to tax the local regions directly, and we should see Đại Việt as similar to contemporary states of Southeast Asia in relying, first, on the production of its central base and, second, on the local contacts of the lords it assigned to rule outer territories for the resources which built up its strength.

Another important aspect of the deltaic environment was its juxtaposition to the sea. For Vietnam, the source of wealth that this juxtaposition afforded, foreign trade, has generally been ignored. Yet it is a source which must be looked at much more closely. The era of the Sung dynasty in China was a great period for trade, and the other major inland wet rice states of classical Southeast Asia (Java, Angkor and Pagan) had become increasingly involved in contacts with the international route which stretched from the southeast coast of China to the Mediterranean. Đại Việt too fits this pattern of increasing commercial involvement and expansion in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. We know that its major port was Vân-dồn on the coast east of Thăng-long. The *Đại Việt Sử Ký* has entries for the years 1149 and 1184 (as well as 1285, 1349 and 1360 during the Trần dynasty) which show Vân-dồn as an international port in contact with the area around the Gulf of Siam and with parts of the island world, most particularly Java.[48] By the late twelfth century, Java had become, as Chou noted elsewhere in his book, the most important trade center for Southeast Asia, and Đại Việt was in touch with it via the international route.[49]

Kenneth R. Hall has suggested to us how, as the inland wet rice states came in contact with the international trade route, they began to expand their commercial links. His prime example is Angkor under Suryavarman I in the first half of the eleventh century who sent embassies to the Colas on the southeast coast of India as well as to the Vietnamese.[50] These embassies, to Hall, had a basic economic purpose, however they were recorded by the receiving states. Thereafter, increasing commercialization of interstate contacts may have been part of the rising tensions in the eastern mainland. Sporadically from the 1120's to the 1210's Angkor, Champa and Đại Việt were at war. One cause, at least from the Cham point of view, could have been an apparent growth of a trading route from the southern ports of China across the Gulf of Tonkin to Nghệ-an, south of the Red River delta; from there it seems to have gone across the mountains via Hà-trại Pass to the Mekong River valley and then down to Cambodia. Such a route would have bypassed the access to Angkor by the lower Mekong and consequently threatened Cham control of the trade.[51] The route across the Gulf of Tonkin from China would also have brought numerous Chinese into the lower Red River delta and the lowland areas just south of the delta in Thanh-hóa and Nghệ-an. Evidence for this comes from two Chinese inscriptions located in Thanh-hóa which provide indication of

well-to-do Chinese families established locally. One inscription was dated 1207 and the other perhaps 1161.[52]

Fan, despite his overstatement, gives us a sense of a thriving commerce in Vietnam involving both Chinese and numerous foreigners. He certainly goes out of his way to speak of a flourishing Chinese population there. One result of the situation, he believed, was a flow of manpower and copper cash out of China into Đại Việt, and this must have helped the local economy to develop rapidly. The goods, particularly the metals, which both Fan and Chao list as the products of Vietnam, help place the Vietnamese within the international commercial context. As I have discussed elsewhere,[53] Chao's text paints an implicit picture of Đại Việt's role in the trade. Vietnamese gold and silver probably went to Cambodia (via Nghê-an and the Mekong?), to Kelantan on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, Srivijaya on the east coast of Sumatra, and ultimately Java. In return, the Vietnamese would have gained spices and other local and international goods of value. Another indication of the Vietnamese commercial interests may be seen in Fan's mention of Đại Việt seizing mountain territory in the south which had been Khmer and was a rich source of aromatic woods, a product much in demand on the international route. This seizure may also have been part of the warfare of the twelfth century. Control of such products naturally enhanced a country's place on the international commercial scene and the wealth and power to be derived therefrom.

We may thus postulate an active Vietnamese trading role in the flourishing international commerce. We need to know much more about the social basis of production for the trade, how the trade was organized and the social dynamic leading to the production of the necessary surplus. Nevertheless, we can say that the wealth brought by the trade would have aided the building of political power, stimulated the local economy and introduced foreigners of sufficient expertise to have an impact on both the economic and political spheres.

### III. Comments on the Lý-Trần Transition

The change of dynasties in Vietnam from the Lý to the Trần in the thirteenth century seems to have been tied to a number of the points discussed above. First of all, it is widely acknowledged that the Trần family originated in China, probably Fu-chien (as Fan had reported for Lý Công Uẩn) and moved to the lower Red River delta sometime in the first half of the twelfth century. Here, "in the vicinity of the sea", it became wealthy through fishing and gained control of the lower delta region, southeast of the capital. It would not be surprising if the Trần gained from the region's trade and its Chinese connection in their rise to power. At the same time, the central control of the Lý was weakening and regional powers like the Trần rose to compete for dominance. The Trần gained entrance to the capital through marrying into the royal family and eventually were able to transfer powers to themselves.[54]

Having gained power, the Trần were all too aware of the Lý weaknesses which had allowed them to do so. The very flexibility of the social and political systems had aided the rise of the Trần and they acted to restrict this flexibility as best they could. Wolters has noted how the Trần historians commented on the events of the past, most

particularly during the Lý, in such a way as to express their intense dislike for social, political and cultural elements which threatened to disrupt the political scene.[55] Partly because of the worry over the succession problem and partly perhaps because of their Chinese background, the new Trần rulers established a strict rule of patrilineality and primogeniture in the royal succession. To make sure that the eldest son did succeed to the throne after his father, the early Trần kings began the innovation of abdicating in favor of their eldest sons and placing the latter on the throne while they themselves retained actual power. The Trần, to quote Wolters, "improvised the practice of parallel-cousin marriages between the heir and a Trần cousin, the practice of installing a single empress and the practice of early nomination of heirs".[56] By providing such a structure to a fluid situation, the Trần moved to cut down on the competitive position of rival families backing potential heirs related to them. Yet it should be noted that the Trần did not attempt to push these principles of patrilineality and primogeniture beyond the royal court and into Vietnamese society at large. This would occur only in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries under the Lê and Mạc rulers of those years.[57]

On the other hand, as far as we can see at this time, the Trần did try to maintain a ritual continuity from Lý times. We have already spoken of the existence of the royal cult of the King of Heaven, **Đế-thích** (Indra), in Trần as well as Lý ritual and of the continuation of the blood oath of allegiance. In this way, the Trần benefited from the heroic image and supernatural prowess of the Lý rulers as established in their rites. These contacts with the supernatural would remain a part of the Vietnamese state until displaced by the rise of the Chinese model after the crisis of the late fourteenth century.[58]

Where the Trần did change governmental procedure was in administration. Wishing to insure a better control over the countryside and its resources, human and material, the Trần kings fairly rapidly began to push the hand of the central government more directly into the countryside. During the mid-thirteenth century, they established what we might call an experiment in bureaucratic administration. The Trần broke up the system of the five **phủ**, raising sub-units up to an equal level. More officials were allowed access to the throne. Population registers were set up. The examination system was overhauled and its products used in provincial administration, not merely as adjuncts of the royal court. For the first time, a provincial administrative system appeared and was staffed to some degree with graduates of the examinations. Through this structure, we have in 1255 the first attempt to coordinate the diking system throughout the Red River delta and in Thanh-hóa to the south.[59] An active role in economic development and the undoubted encouragement of foreign trade probably meant the continued growth of the Vietnamese economy through the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth.[60]

Our study of the Chinese **pi-chi** from the 1170s has allowed us to probe into the nature of the Lý state and the conditions therein which led to the Trần dynasty and its administrative changes. Yet one major area which these Chinese scholar-officials did not probe was Buddhism. We are given glimpses of public life and public cults, but not of the belief system which existed in the country and which continued under the Trần. In this volume, Taylor describes the important Buddhist

developments of eleventh-century Đại Việt and Mabbett places the Mahayana Buddhism of Champa in a broad context, "nourished by vigorous international cultural traffic". Though scholar-officials from China might see little of note in what would have been to them an alien (hence barbarian) belief system, we need to obtain a better understanding of Vietnamese Buddhism. The Phong-nhã caves mentioned by Mabbett lay just south of Vietnamese territory at that time and would be a good place to begin an examination of the interrelations between Vietnamese and Cham Buddhism, with both placed in the international context.

The Vietnamese and Chinese material available to us on Đại Việt in the Lý period join with the discussion at the conference to indicate that no clear cultural faultline existed between the area of greater Chinese influence and that of greater Indian influence. Trần Quốc Vượng[61] shows us that scholarship in Vietnam today supports this notion of no major division between Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia through history. For Vượng, these Southeast Asian elements have remained rooted in the villages of the lowlands, with their wet rice culture and their spirits and temples and can be seen as well in the Buddhist monarchy of the Lý period.

The history of Đại Việt in these early centuries also fits well with Hermann Kulke's description in this volume of the structural changes undergone by its major contemporaries (especially Angkor and Java). Đại Việt shares with its southern neighbors the **mandala** nature of its domain, the changes in structure through local, regional and imperial phases, the borrowing of a foreign concept of universal ruler, and the achievement of a more integrated central focus and ritual. The time has come to treat Đại Việt as an integral, not an exceptional, part of Southeast Asia and to conduct our teaching and our studies in this vein.

## NOTES

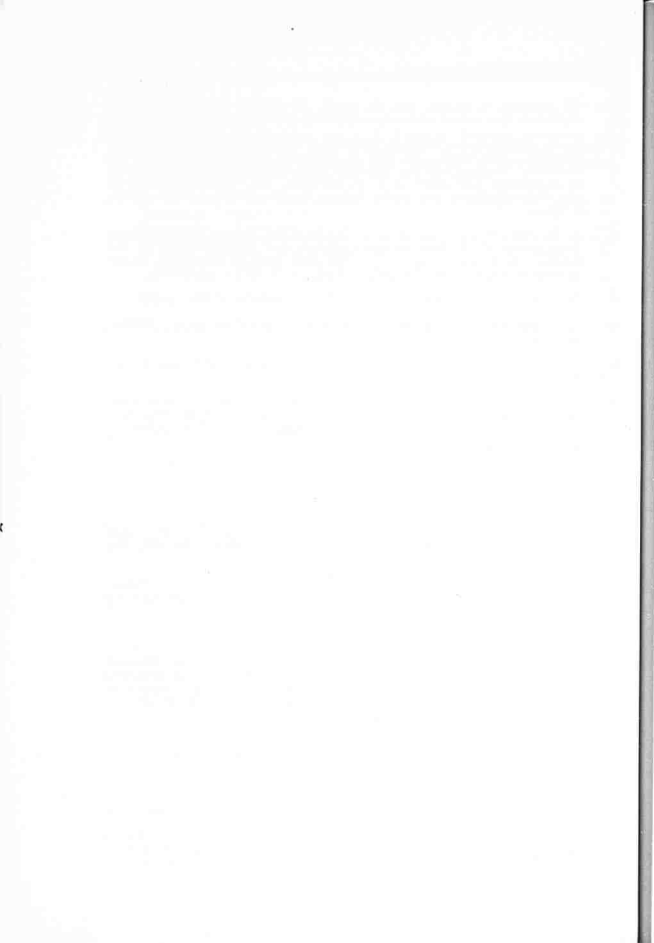
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8. *Sung Shih* (1903 edition), 448, pp.5a-6b; Ngô Sĩ Liên, *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*, trans. (Hanoi, 1972), I, pp.173-4 (hereafter **TT**); Ma, **WHTK**, p. 2591; St. Denis (1883), II, pp.316-20. In using the St Denis trans-10/25/85 Fri 16:50:16 lation of Ma Tuan-lin, the reader must be careful of what Paul Pelliot, *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* (BEFEO), 4 (1904), p.138, termed "his habitual negligence" where "the translator has read his text poorly". St Denis tends to gloss over some points rather than directly translate them.
9. Ma, **WHTK**, p.2594; St Denis (1883), II, p.352.
10. Ma, **WHTK**, p.2594; St Denis (1883), II, p.360.
11. Wolters (1983), p.59, citing the *Sung Hui Yao Chi-Kao*, fan-i 4, p.7738. Taylor in this volume notes 1164 as the date the Chinese emperor entitled the Vietnamese ruler as *Quốc-vương* instead of *Quân-vương*, thus moving the Vietnamese from "internal" to "external" status.
12. Ma, **WHTK**, p.2595; St Denis (1883), II, pp.363-8; Chou, **LWTT**, pp.17-18; Netolitzky (1977), pp.29-31.



13. Ma, **WHTK**, pp.2594-5; St Denis (1883), II, pp.353-4, 357, 366-7; Wang Gungwu, "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia, a Background Essay" in J. K. Fairbank, ed., **The Chinese World Order** (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p.47.
14. Ma, **WHTK**, p.2594; St Denis (1883), II, pp.355, 360-2.
15. Ma, **WHTK**, p.2594; St Denis (1883), II, pp.349-50, 359-61. For a sketch of early Vietnamese currency and metal production, see Whitmore (1983) in n.48 below.
16. Ma, **WHTK**, p.2594; St Denis (1883), II, pp.354-6, 360-1.
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24. On these texts, see K. W. Taylor, **The Birth of Vietnam**, (Berkeley, Cal., 1983), pp.351-2, 357-9.
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26. Yu Insun, **Law and Family in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Vietnam**, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978.
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28. A. T. Kirsch, "Kinship, Genealogical Claims, and Societal Integration in Ancient Khmer Society: An Interpretation", in Cowan & Wolters (1982), pp.190-202; Wolters (1976), pp.203-26; see also Wolters (1982), pp.7-8.
29. See also Wolters (1982), pp.28-9, 32.
30. Wolters (1976), pp.223-6; in this volume, Wolters notes the Trần succession pattern and describes the weaknesses which occurred therein, during the fourteenth century.
31. Taylor (1983), pp.13, 34, 36, 39, 75-8, 130.

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35. **TT** (Hanoi), I, p.230; IV, pp.81-2; K. W. Taylor, "The Rise of Đại Việt and the Establishment of Thăng-long", in K. R. Hall & J. K. Whitmore, eds., **Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History** (Ann Arbor, 1976), p.179; J. K. Whitmore, "Mạc Đăng Dung" in L. C. Goodrich & Fang Chao-ying, eds., **Dictionary of Ming Biography** (N.Y., 1976), II, p.1031. Taylor in this volume records that, in 1037, the Vietnamese ruler called on the "Emperor of Heaven" (**Thiên-đế**) concerning a matter, while Vương noted at the conference the existence of a temple to **Đế-thích** in the center of Hanoi and, in this volume, the cult of Indra itself. I wish to thank Keith W. Taylor for his initial research on **Đế-thích**.
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37. Lê Tác, **An-nam Chí-lược** (Huế, 1961), p.46.
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39. **VSL** (Hanoi), pp.133, 137, 153, 193, 197, 213.
40. Wolters (1982), pp.18-20.
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42. Phan Huy Chú, **Lịch Triều Hiến Chương Loại Chí**, trans. (Hanoi, 1960), II, p.69.
43. *Ibid.*, I, p.183; II, pp.154, 160, 178; Wolters (1976), p.209.
44. In this volume, see Guy for the ceramics, Taylor for the "six armies" and Manguin for the manner in which Malay fleets were formed.
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58. For fourteenth century Vietnam, see Wolters and Ungar in this volume and J. K. Whitmore, *Vietnam, Hồ Quý Ly, and the Ming, 1371-1421*, New Haven, Conn., 1985.
59. Drawn from TT (Hanoi), II, pp.7-25 passim. On the hydraulic system, note Stargardt's relevant general comments in this volume and see Gourou (1965), pp.84-5.
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# 7

## Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam

Keith Taylor

### An approach to the Lý dynasty

The conventional view of the Lý dynasty has been that it established a centralized state power in Vietnam during the course of the eleventh century. Whether arguing from the historical, bureaucratic model of a strong Chinese dynasty[1] or the theoretical, economic model of the Asiatic Mode of Production,[2] scholars in and out of Vietnam have favoured the idea that, beginning with the Lý, dynastic power in Vietnam was expressed as a centralized state that wielded effective administrative control over the different territories of the realm.

This view has in recent years been questioned by two Japanese scholars. Minoru Katakura, who has surveyed legal codes and their application in Vietnam during different historical eras, did not directly challenge the idea of a centralized political power, but he introduced fresh insights that stimulate doubt. In 1973, he used the term "centralized feudal system";[3] he believed that the distinctive characteristics of the Lý penal code (its relative "tolerance" or leniency) was related to "the power structure of the dynasty", and "the political power basis of the Lý dynasty was founded on its acceptance of the traditions and the independence of villages".[4] In 1977, he noted that the court chronicles record frequent appearances of dragons during the Lý dynasty and that the Lý kings often presided over traditional religious rites such as oaths and covenants or prayers for rain; he went on to surmise that the Lý family tried to establish imperialistic rule over rival clans by transforming traditional Vietnamese customs into national religious rites.[5] Yumio Sakurai interpreted Katakura's view of the Lý dynasty as a shamanistic, religious dynasty rather than a state based on laws.[6]

In 1980, Yumio Sakurai published his study on patterns of settlement and agriculture during the Lý dynasty, one in a series covering several epochs of Vietnamese history.[7] He based his work on a thorough search of historical sources and a detailed knowledge of pre-modern agrarian economy. He argues that the Lý dynasty was a "local dynasty", meaning that it directly controlled only one of several political-economic regions in the plains of northern Vietnam.[8] He believes that the different regional powers that appeared during the tenth century were not completely suppressed until the thirteenth

century by the Trần dynasty. Sakurai concludes that "the Lý dynasty was not a centralized government; it was only the leader of a confederated state of local native powers".[9]

Sakurai examined the five instances of embankments being built in Vietnam before and during the Lý dynasty that are recorded in historical sources and argues that none of them were related to agriculture, either to prevent flooding of agricultural lands or as part of a system of irrigation. They either had a military purpose or (in three of the five instances) were meant to protect the capital city from flooding. According to Sakurai, there is no evidence that there was a unified system of agrarian hydraulics in northern Vietnam at that time, control of which was the basis of centralized dynastic power.[10]

Sakurai also examined administrative evidence for the Lý establishing a centralized state and found it unconvincing. The *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, compiled in the late fifteenth century by Ngô Sĩ Liên, says that in 1010 Lý Công Uẩn established twenty-four districts. This has been frequently cited as evidence for a centralized administration. But Sakurai points out that this information does not appear in the *Việt sử lược*, an earlier source, and concludes that "the creation of a centralized local administrative system was incorporated into the chronicles by compilers such as Ngô Sĩ Liên as a suitable undertaking of the emperor when the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* was compiled in 1479".[11] Furthermore, Sakurai notes that Ngô Sĩ Liên reports that the system of twenty-four districts was introduced in the year 1222, thereby "admitting that the system of districts, if it was introduced in 1010 at all, had no actual effect". Sakurai sums up his discussion by saying: "Therefore, it is a faulty argument to say that a centralized state based on laws existed on the basis of the record of the establishment of local administrative systems such as a system of twenty-four districts. One cannot rely on such abstract records in the chronicles if one intends to find out the reality of the Lý dynasty's control of the provinces. It is necessary to collect and analyse individual concrete descriptions and reconstruct an over-all picture." [12]

Sakurai's cogent exposition of methods of agronomic adaptation to and patterns of village settlement in different regional topographies provides a firm basis for interpreting the internal politics of the Lý dynastic period as a system of regional powers grouped under the Lý royal umbrella; the history of the Lý dynasty thus becomes the story of how one powerful clan came to be recognized by its peers as occupying a position of pre-eminence, how this pre-eminence was expressed and formalized, and how it eventually faded away. Sakurai explains the political system prevailing during the Lý dynasty as a response to the threat of Chinese intervention; that in order to maintain the tributary relationship with China, the appearance of unity behind a king was essential. The primary value of the Lý dynasty and its justification to other regional powers was its diplomatic role vis-a-vis China.[13]

My own research on Lý Vietnam tends to support Sakurai's interpretation. An implication of this view is that Lý Vietnam did not adopt the Chinese style of dynastic institution with a bureaucratic administration. If this is so, then what kind of dynasty are we talking about? The term "shamanism" rings a bit oddly in our ears with regard to Southeast Asia, and I suspect that it is not entirely appropriate because there is no evidence that the Lý kings used ecstatic trance to

communicate with the supernatural world, though they communicated with the supernatural world in other ways. The "big man" or "man of prowess", as Professor Wolters has developed the idea in the context of Hindu devotionalism and pre-Angkor Cambodia, [14] is aiming at a notion very similar to what I am trying to get at for Lý Vietnam. We are talking about some form of sacred kingship. Frankly, I do not know what specialized term to use for this, so will for now be content to call it "Lý dynasty religion". In this paper I am interested in the peculiar type of authority wielded by the Lý dynasty, to what extent it was indebted to a Chinese prototype, to what extent it lies within non-Chinese patterns shared with other peoples in Southeast Asia, and to what extent it exemplifies the genius of the Vietnamese. I will argue that, while Chinese classical lore had been "localized" and Chinese forms were utilized for diplomatic purposes, the substance of Lý authority and legitimacy depended upon patterns of thought shared with other Southeast Asian peoples, and that the particular way in which these patterns of thought were expressed in the eleventh century reflect distinctive aspects of Vietnamese historical experience.

### Sino-Vietnamese relations

Looking at Vietnam's transition from a dependency of the T'ang empire to an independent kingdom, it is clear that the concept of authority and legitimacy established in Vietnam by the T'ang and earlier Chinese dynasties was not abandoned abruptly or in its entirety. Rather it evolved into the tributary relationship that came to govern Sino-Vietnamese relations. When T'ang fell, Vietnamese leaders initially posed as military governors (tiết độ sứ 節度使), a title conferred upon governors in Vietnam by the T'ang court from the year 966. [15] Their authority and legitimacy theoretically derived from their obedience to a northern empire. The formalities of such a relationship were observed even after events had rendered them fictitious. Khúc Thừa Mỹ solicited and received recognition as military governor of Vietnam by the Later Liang dynasty in 911. Dương Đình Nghệ, after defeating Southern Han soldiers in 930-931, proclaimed himself military governor and informed Southern Han, whereupon Southern Han recognized him as such.

There is no evidence that Ngô Quyền, after defeating the Southern Han expedition of 938-939, used the title of military governor. He proclaimed himself a king (vương 王), as did his brother-in-law and two [16] sons who succeeded him; yet in 954, his second son, Ngô Xương Vãn, solicited and received the title of military governor from Southern Han, though he later found an excuse to avoid meeting the Southern Han official sent to confer the title. The so-called Ngô monarchy, the fragile legacy of a prematurely deceased hero, appears to have been vaguely inspired by the example of the "ten kingdoms" prevailing in China at that time and seems to have lacked any compelling concept of authority and legitimacy in the Vietnamese context. The royal styles adopted by the kings of that time ("King of Peace", "King of Southern Chin", "King of the Heavenly Plan", "Pacifying King") and the brief experiment in 950-951 with two kings ruling together suggest an unimaginative, *ad hoc* response to what were perceived as momentary problems. Ngô Xương Vãn's aborted attempt to revert to the formalities of T'ang administration as late as 954 reveals that the ruling class was

at a dead end, and Xương Văn's death in 963 led to the collapse of Ngô family authority and the rise of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh.

With Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and the Hoa-lư monarchy, fresh elements appear. The stories recorded about Đinh Bộ Lĩnh's boyhood stress supernatural intervention. The young Bộ Lĩnh is saved from death by the sudden appearance of two dragons. His father is thought to have been an otter, linking him with aquatic powers and the belief, firmly established in Vietnamese mythology, that sovereign authority derives from the watery realm. His rise to power follows burial of his father's bones in a geomantically potent spot. His assassination is explained by no less than four different stories, each one associating his demise with supernatural forces.[17] No such stories have survived about Lê Hoàn, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh's successor, but it is clear that he was perceived by his contemporaries as being in the same mould as Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, for an ancestral temple was built in Hoa-Lư, the capital of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and Lê Hoàn, featuring clay images of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, Lê Hoàn, and the queen they shared, all seated together. This temple survived until the fifteenth century when it was dismantled and "gotten rid of" by officials of the new Lê dynasty.[18]

Whatever domestic significance this emphasis on supernatural intervention had for the Vietnamese, it was clearly of no use in their dealings with China. Similarly, whatever significance the concept of authority and legitimacy inherited from T'ang China had in the context of Sino-Vietnamese diplomacy, it was of little or no use to Vietnamese kings in dealing with their own people. From the time of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, and at least through the Lý dynasty, Chinese concepts of authority and legitimacy were primarily an aspect of Sino-Vietnamese diplomacy.

The formalities of Sino-Vietnamese relations during this time need not detain us here. But I wish to observe that the Lý dynasty was extraordinarily successful in its diplomatic work vis-a-vis China. It appears that the Lý court took the Sino-Vietnamese relationship very seriously, as a fundamental problem that required constant effort. In settling the Sino-Vietnamese border after the war of the 1070s, Vietnamese negotiators displayed a cleverness and persistence that astonished their Chinese counterparts.[19] The most striking evidence of the diplomatic skill of the Lý court came in 1164 when it succeeded in obtaining from the Southern Sung emperor a promotion in the status of the country and a significant readjustment of the Sino-Vietnamese relationship in its favour. From the time of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh until 1164, Vietnamese kings were recognized by the Chinese court as **quận vương** (郡王), a rank that identified them as a type of "internal vassal" with their lands theoretically being part of the imperial administrative system that governed China proper. In 1164, however, Vietnamese envoys at the Chinese court solicited and received promotion of the Vietnamese king to the rank of **quốc vương** (國王), which identified him as an "external vassal" whose lands constituted a "kingdom" apart from the imperial administrative system. How this happened and why the Chinese allowed it is a topic that deserves a separate study.[20] What I wish to say here is that Sakurai's evaluation of the Lý dynasty and its role as Vietnamese spokesman in dealing with China deserves careful attention. The Lý dynasty was initially the handiwork of the Buddhist monkhood, which from the time of the Hoa-lư monarchy in the tenth century was responsible for sustaining diplomatic contact with China. Familiarity with Chinese concepts of authority and legitimacy among



ruling-class Vietnamese was an inescapable aspect of Sino-Vietnamese relations and does not imply that Vietnamese rulers were applying these concepts to their own land. Lý dynastic power was based on more than diplomatic skill. Benefiting from Lê Hoàn's defeat of the Sung armies in 981, the Lý kings carried forward a royal tradition of defending the frontiers as an important aspect of legitimizing their authority. The Lý dynastic consensus also rested upon a successful resolution of domestic clan rivalries and a compelling statement of Vietnamese religious and cultural sensibilities.

### "Lý dynasty religion"

Eschewing further preliminaries, I now wish to discuss what I earlier referred to as "Lý dynasty religion". Briefly, I will argue that the Lý kings posed as men, not gods, whose superior moral qualities, broadly defined in Buddhist terms as compassionate and humanitarian, stimulated and aroused the supernatural powers dwelling in the terrain of the Việt realm (mountains, rivers, trees, fields) and in the historical memory of the Việt people (deceased heroes); these powers were aroused by royal virtue to declare themselves as protector spirits of the realm. Ideas from the Chinese classics and histories were occasionally cited as textual authority for explaining or justifying this process of "declaring the unfathomable". This process appears to be a distinctive aspect of "Lý dynasty religion", being a form of "self discovery" for the Vietnamese after several centuries of Chinese overlordship, which denied and attempted to suppress "subversive" elements of popular Việt culture related to a separate (i.e. non-Chinese) sense of Việt cultural identity and political history. It seems to me that the sort of religious or supernatural sanction that the Lý kings derived from this role was the primary ingredient in establishing and maintaining their legitimacy and authority; they were obeyed for what were perceived as their moral and spiritual qualities, not because they commanded an administrative system that could enforce compliance. The expression "declaring the unfathomable" may be especially significant, not only because it describes what the Việts apparently believed was happening (i.e. the virtue of their kings were stimulating the spiritual powers of the realm to "declare" themselves) but also because it appears in the title of a book apparently written by and for ruling-class Việts in the eleventh century. An important related theme is the idea of the Buddhist monkhood effecting a reformation of certain questionable members of the supernatural world, admonishing delinquent spirits to conform to the "civilizing instructions" of a new era. When the spirits "declared" themselves, they did so as cooperative, protector spirits of the "civilizing" work undertaken by the Lý kings and the Buddhist monkhood. The substance of being "civilized" in eleventh-century Vietnam was a recognition of the authority of the Lý kings and an acceptance of the religious ideas espoused to justify that authority. Local spirits who "declared" themselves as protectors of the Lý kings presumably reflected the formal political loyalties of local clans. The authority of the Lý kings was essentially moral but, within limits, was also temporal.

Let us begin with the book mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the *Báo cực truyện* (報極傳), "Records of declaring the unfathomable".

This book no longer exists, so all we know of it is based on citations preserved in works that have survived. The *Báo cực truyện* is cited in the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* (古珠法雲佛本行語錄), "Stories about the Buddha of Pháp-vân temple at Cổ-châu". Trần Văn Giáp, in his 1932 study of Vietnamese Buddhist texts, dated the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* at the fourteenth century on the basis of its citation of the *Báo cực truyện*: [21] he did this by referring to citations from the *Báo cực truyện* in the *Việt điện u linh tập* (越南幽靈集), "Compilation of the departed spirits in the realm of Việt", a work compiled in the early fourteenth century by Lý Tế Xuyên with a preface dated 1329, which are followed by lists of titles conferred in the years 1285, 1288, and 1313. [22] Trần Văn Giáp concludes, on the basis of these dates, that the *Báo cực truyện*, and thus the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục*, which cites it, cannot be dated prior to 1313. The logic of Trần Văn Giáp's interpretation, however, cannot be sustained, because these dates are peculiar to the *Việt điện u linh tập* where they follow citations from several sources, not just the *Báo cực truyện*. [23] The dates in the *Việt điện u linh tập* cannot be attributed to the *Báo cực truyện*.

It is known that the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* was originally written in Chinese, and then translated into *nôm* (喃), Vietnamese character writing, by a Buddhist priest named Viên Chiếu. Viên Chiếu is a well-known figure in Vietnamese Buddhism who died in 1090 at the age of ninety-two. Trần Văn Giáp, however, having decided, without good reason as we have seen, that the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* cannot predate 1313, asserts that the Viên Chiếu who translated this work could not have been the famous priest of the eleventh century, but was rather some other, fourteenth-century priest, memory of whom has been lost. [24] This is a difficult position to take, for there is no evidence of a priest named Viên Chiếu after the eleventh century and it is very unlikely that there was any such priest, for the eleventh-century Viên Chiếu was a large figure in Vietnamese Buddhism and it is doubtful whether a later priest would have had the temerity to take the same name. Some may argue that the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* could not have been translated into *nôm* in the eleventh century because *nôm* was not sufficiently developed at that time. There is no evidence to prove such an assertion, but there is evidence and logic to support the idea that *nôm* was sufficiently developed at that time. [25] It is probable that Vietnamese Buddhist priests, certainly no later than the eleventh century, developed *nôm* to render Buddhist texts written in Chinese more usable for vernacular instruction.

Trần Văn Giáp says that the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* "is in Chinese, but each phrase is followed by its translation in Vietnamese, written in *nôm* characters in two lines below the Chinese text; in place of authors' names, it makes mention of 'old sources' (古本) and of being 'translated by Viên Chiếu' (圓照譯疏)". [26] I have not yet been able to obtain access to the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* to see whether or not any of its contents would require a date later than the eleventh century. [27] What I have been able to learn of its contents from Trần Văn Giáp's essay does not require a date later than the eleventh century. [28] It is a reasonable supposition that the Viên Chiếu who "translated" the *Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục* was the well-known priest who died in 1090, and that the *Báo cực truyện* can thus be dated to the eleventh century. To be more specific,

the **Việt điện u linh tập** cites the **Báo cực truyện** for a story about Lý Nhật Tôn's expedition to Champa in 1069, so we can reasonably assume that the **Báo cực truyện** was written after 1069 but before 1090. The contents of the **Báo cực truyện** gleaned from citations in the **Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục** and the **Việt điện u linh tập** may offer us a glimpse into how ruling-class Vietnamese understood their kings in the 1070s and 1080s.

As an introduction to what the **Báo cực truyện** has to say about the Lý kings, let us take a closer look at Viên Chiếu. The authors of the **Báo cực truyện** and the **Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục** are unknown, but mention of Viên Chiếu as a translator of the **Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục** is a clue about the sort of people who probably produced these works. There are four points worthy of note about Viên Chiếu.

First, he was himself a peripheral member of the royal clan. He was a cousin of the third Lý king, Lý Nhật Tôn, being a nephew of Nhật Tôn's mother. There is evidence that he held the position of **quốc sư**, a post of some importance at the Lý court (to which we will return shortly). This allows us to assume that he was acquainted with "dynastic affairs" and that he may have been interested in propagating literature expressing what the Lý clan wished the realm to know about itself. We can assume that he knew the **Báo cực truyện** and that he had no problems with it.

Secondly, his personally formative years coincided with the formative years of the Lý dynasty. He was a contemporary of the second Lý king, Lý Phật Mã, being only two years older than Phật Mã. Phật Mã and his generation "established" the Lý dynasty as a relatively durable centre of national power. Viên Chiếu was in his "prime of life" during the reign of Phật Mã, the most impressive and capable of all the Lý kings. Consequently, we can assume that he was fully aware of the ethos that governed the Việt ruling class during that significant time.

Third, Viên Chiếu was a scholar. He is known to have been a serious student of the Viên-giác sutra (圓覺經) and to have perfectly understood the three modes of meditation by which to achieve nirvana that are expounded in this sutra.[29] This sutra, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by a T'ang priest in 693, influenced both the Ch'an (Vietnamese **Thiền**) school and the Hua-yen school of Buddhism in China. The short-lived Hua-yen school was noted for its appeal to the intellect.[30] Viên Chiếu's interest in this sutra was famous, being specifically noted in surviving biographical information, and appears to have been unusual at that time and place. Also unusual was the recognition Viên Chiếu achieved in China. He wrote a treatise entitled **Được-sư thập-nhị nguyện văn** (藥師十二願文); this appears to have been a compilation of prayers to the bodhisattva Bhaisajyaguru, who is thought to cure illness. This treatise was presented to the Sung court and was reportedly praised by the Chinese Buddhist master Kao Tso (高座法師). Three other works are attributed to Viên Chiếu: **Tán viên-giác kinh** (讚圓覺經); **Thập-nhị bồ-tát hành tu chứng đạo tràng** (十二菩薩行修證道場); **Tham đồ hiển quyết** (參徒顯決).[31] Viên Chiếu's reputation as a scholar and author makes it very unlikely that a fourteenth-century priest would have taken the same name or pseudo-epigraphically attributed his efforts to Viên Chiếu.

Fourth, Viên Chiếu is identified as belonging to the **Vô Ngôn Thông** "sect" of Vietnamese **Thiền** (Chinese Ch'an, Japanese Zen) Buddhism. **Trần**

Văn Giáp, in his study of Vietnamese Buddhism, found it convenient to arrange surviving biographical information according to a scheme of three Thiên "sects": Vinitaruci, Vô Ngôn Thông, and Thảo Đường. This scheme was imposed by the vicissitudes of how the information has been preserved, but a close look at the information itself reveals the limitations of the three-sect scheme. Some figures are claimed by more than one "sect".[32] There is mention of at least two other "sects".[33] Some important temples were associated with more than one "sect".[34] The lines of patriarchal succession are often obscure. It is clear that what has survived is simply the biographies of those priests judged by later generations as being worthy of emulation.[35] Particularly famous priests have been included in the lists of more than one "sect". "Sects" that produced no members worthy of note were ignored. Judging from the actual information preserved, the qualities of individual priests were more important than the concept of patriarchal succession for those who compiled surviving information. I believe the term "sect" is inappropriate here. There were no Buddhist "sects" in Lý Vietnam in the sense of the monkhood being organized into different hierarchies of authority established at particular temples adhering to different doctrinal outlooks. When the Lý kings dealt with the monkhood, they did so in a comprehensive fashion with no mention of nor provision for "sect" differences.[36] The idea of a "sect" arose out of the practice of identifying a priest in terms of who his teacher had been and who had ordained him. Since a priest theoretically passed on to his disciple(s) what he had learned from his teacher, we can speak of informal pedagogical traditions flowing from certain prominent figures who were thought to have introduced something new into Vietnamese Buddhist thought.

The so-called Thảo Đường "sect" was established by a Chinese priest of that name who was captured in Champa by the Việt expedition of 1069. He was assigned to serve the *tăng lục* (僧錄), chief of the monks at court, who recognized his erudition and recommended him to the king; according to Thảo Đường's biography, King Lý Nhật Tôn appointed him to serve as *quốc sư*. [37]

The Thảo Đường "sect" is different from the other two major traditions in at least four ways. First, people associated with it were for the most part members of the court or royalty. Three Lý kings are listed as patriarchs, along with a prince, a "literatus" (居士), three high court officers (one *tham chánh* (參政) and two *thái phó* (太傅)), and the "chief of actors" (禡兒管甲). [38] Second, the Thảo Đường tradition seems to have been more concerned with a strict scheme of patriarchal succession than the other two traditions; I suspect this is a result of its being small and elitist. Third, only a few temples are associated with the tradition and they are temples that are also associated with either the Vinitaruci or Vô Ngôn Thông traditions, or both of them. [39] Most figures in the Thảo Đường tradition are not associated with a temple at all, but it is simply recorded that they dwelled in a certain village, suggesting that designation as a member of this "sect" was more of a conferred rank than an indication of monastic achievement. Fourth, the Thảo Đường tradition incorporated popular figures from other traditions by means of royal patronage. For example, one of the most distinctive religious figures during the Lý dynasty was Không Lộ (d. 1119), a fisherman turned rustic Buddhist master who built a temple in his home village and attracted

disciples.[40] His most famous disciple, Giác Hải, was cited in a poem by King Lý Cán Đốc,[41] and the court subsidized Giác Hải's posthumous cult.[42] Không Lộ and Giác Hải are claimed by both the Vô Ngôn Thông and the Thảo Đường traditions, but their biographies claim that they belonged to a Định-sớ (定初) "sect".[43] Similarly, one Thảo Đường figure, according to some sources, was the disciple of a member of a Kiến-sớ "sect".[44] It appears that the Thảo Đường tradition was chiefly a tradition of royal patronage for members of the elite and interesting commoners who caught the fancy of the elite. But it must also be borne in mind that royalty and elite figures were also associated with the other traditions.

Vinītaruci, the Indian Brahman who arrived via China in 580, established a tradition of instruction and ordination with which several prominent tenth and eleventh-century priests were identified. Pháp Thuận (d. 991) was a learned man who wrote a book entitled *Bồ-tát-hiệu sám hối văn* (菩薩統悔文), and was assigned to receive Sung envoys in the year 987. He reportedly impressed the Chinese guests with his impromptu versifying ability.[45] The most famous of the Vinītaruci figures is Vạn Hạnh (d. 1025), mentor of Lý Công Uẩn, the founder of the Lý dynasty. Other prominent eleventh-century figures who were associated with the Vinītaruci tradition are: Mahā-mara, a Cham who was active in the southern provinces;[46] Huệ Sinh (d. 1064), who presided at the Vạn-tuế temple located within the royal compound at Thăng-long (modern Hanoi) and is identified in his biography as "director of monks at the Lý court";[47] Sùng Phạm (d. 1087), who spent nine years on pilgrimage in India and gathered disciples with an interest in the Buddhist holy land;[48] and Chân Không (d. 1100), a retired court officer who is remembered apparently only because he was the teacher of Diệu Nhân (d. 1113), a widowed royal princess who took religious vows.[49] In the twelfth century, prominent members of the Vinītaruci tradition included Đạo Hạnh (d. 1112), whose death roughly coincided with the birth of Lý Dương Hoán (reigned 1127-1138), a circumstance that led to certain conjectures that enhanced Lý Dương Hoán's spiritual status;[50] Bản Tịch (d. 1140), a descendant of an officer at the court of Lê Hoàn (reigned 980-1005);[51] Khánh Hỷ (d. 1142), son of an Indian Brahman, born in Thăng-long;[52] Pháp Dung (d. 1174), a descendant of a T'ang governor of Ái (modern Thanh-hóa);[53] and Viên Thông (d. 1151), from a "family of religious functionaries", who was appointed *quốc sư* in 1143 and left more than a thousand poems and three books: *Chữ phật tích duyên sự* (諸佛緣事), *Hồng chung văn bi kí* (洪鍾文碑記), and *Tăng gia tạp lục* (僧家雜錄).[54] The "miscellaneous" character of the Vinītaruci tradition, with prominent court figures as well as people whose claim to membership in the elite rested upon the status of their ancestors (descendants of a T'ang governor and a courtier of Lê Hoàn) and aliens (a Cham and a "son of an Indian Brahman") suggest that it was close to popular culture. An interesting point is that, unlike both the Thảo Đường and Vô Ngôn Thông traditions, there is no evidence of a Chinese monk ever arriving in Vietnam and becoming a member of the Vinītaruci tradition.

This brings us back to the Vô Ngôn Thông tradition in which Viên Chiêu stood. In terms of surviving information that would allow us to construct a scheme of patriarchal succession, this tradition lies between the "looser" Vinītaruci and the "tighter" Thảo Đường tradi-

tions. Vô Ngôn Thông was a Chinese monk who arrived in Vietnam in 820. Up until the founding of the Lý dynasty there is a clear and simple master-to-disciple pattern of succession, culminating in Khuông Việt (d. 1011) who served at the courts of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and Lê Hoàn (965-1005) as head of the Buddhist religion, and his disciple Đa Bảo, who worked closely with Lý Công Uẩn (reigned 1009-1028). Đa Bảo had two prominent disciples, Thiên Lão and Định Hương. Thiên Lão attracted high royalty; his disciples included an elder brother of a queen and King Lý Phật Mã (reigned 1028-1054). Định Hương's disciples included Viên Chiếu, who as we have seen was a nephew of one of Lý Phật Mã's queens, and two monks, Bảo Tĩnh and Tâm Minh, who became famous for burning themselves to death in 1034 to produce relics for the king.[55] Viên Chiếu, a bookish luminary, was succeeded as quốc sư by his disciple Thông Biện (d. 1134), who was succeeded by his disciple Biện Tài.[56] Thông Biện's biography reveals that in 1096 he was consulted by the Queen Mother (Ý Lan) for an explanation of the history of Buddhism in Vietnam; his answers to her questions reveal him as an impressive scholar.[57] Biện Tài was a Chinese from Kuang Chou who came to Vietnam during the reign of Lý Nhật Tôn (reigned 1054-1072); he wrote a treatise on royal request entitled *Chiếu đối lục* ( 照對錄 ).[58] The most prominent twelfth-century figure in the Vô Ngôn Thông tradition was Đạo Huệ (d. 1172) whose chief claim to fame is that he attracted a large number of disciples. Information about seven of his disciples has survived; two of them were Chinese, one born in Vietnam and one a monk originally from Fu Chien.[59] After the generation of Đạo Huệ's disciples, the last prominent Vô Ngôn Thông figure was Thường Chiếu (d. 1203), who served at the Lý court and is noted for passing on the "memoire of Thông Biện about the different Buddhist sects in Vietnam" to one of his disciples. An interesting item is that Thường Chiếu resided at the Lục-tổ temple, which in the tenth and eleventh centuries had been a center of the Vinītaruci tradition; Vạn Hạnh had resided there and Lý Công Uẩn had studied there. Another interesting item is that two Vô Ngôn Thông figures in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were noted for their practice of "Indian asceticism".[60] These details reinforce our view of Buddhism during the Lý dynasty as encompassing a varied, experimental, non-exclusive national culture. The Vô Ngôn Thông tradition appears to have tended toward meditation and asceticism,[61] which distinguishes it in a general way from the more popular orientation of the Vinītaruci tradition and the more elitist focus of the Thảo Dương tradition. But there are significant exceptions to each of these generalizations.

To lend perspective to our discussion of Buddhist "sects" in Lý Vietnam, we must also mention the so-called "Taoist priests" who attended the Lý court. When Lý Công Uẩn lay on his deathbed in 1028, the royal robes were entrusted to a "Taoist priest" ( 道士 ) who kept them in the "Southern Emperor Taoist Temple" ( 南帝觀 ), where in the middle of the night a shimmering yellow dragon appeared in the midst of the regalia.[62] In 1031, Lý Phật Mã recorded the names of Taoist priests in a palace register.[63] In the following year, an udumbara tree reportedly blossomed at a Buddhist temple located "in front of" a Taoist temple.[64] The udumbara tree of Buddhist lore, sometimes identified as a sycamore, was believed to blossom only once in a thousand years. I believe that these "Taoist priests" were

experts in dealing with the spirits of local animist cults, similar to Shinto in Japan. It seems clear that they performed important ritual roles at the Lý court.

Let us briefly review the significance of our digression about the religious culture of Lý Vietnam. I have just used the adjectives "varied, experimental, and non-exclusive" to describe a "national culture" encompassed by Buddhism. Each of these adjectives aims at a significant characteristic of Lý Vietnam. The elastic, miscellaneous nature of the evidence about Lý Buddhism points to a culture that on a practical, everyday, operational level "varied" from region to region, locality to locality. This accords with Sakurai's findings about the socio-economic foundations of Lý Vietnam and the implications of this for regional autonomy, both economic and political. Evidence from the eleventh century reveals a profusion of local deities and cults. It was the role of the king to establish a personal relationship of trust and loyalty with the different local spirits, thus bringing them into the "center", incorporating them into the Việt identity being developed at the court. I suspect that this sort of process was the substance of Lý authority and not just a mask for more pragmatic military or administrative arrangements, for which I fail to find convincing evidence. "Lý dynasty religion" comprised popular religions in the process of being folded into a national cult of royal authority. This is what I think Katakura was driving at when he spoke about the Lý establishing authority over rival clans by transforming traditional Vietnamese customs into national religious rites.[65]

"Lý dynasty religion" was "experimental" because this was an age of self-discovery for the Vietnamese. The early Lý kings were continually "discovering" new spirits who came forward to announce themselves as loyal protectors of royal authority. During the centuries of Chinese rule, heroic figures appropriate as symbols of national identity had been forgotten except in their home villages or localities where posthumous cults survived at shrines dedicated to their memory. Eleventh-century Vietnamese were genuinely engaged in discovering who they were, in exploring the collective Việt memory, and the king was the key figure in this cultural adventure. It was his virtue that aroused the slumbering spirits and galvanized them into a supernatural shield to protect the nascent kingdom. The variety of the cults that attracted royal patronage in the eleventh century suggest an experimental attitude open to new information and which was curious rather than certain about the limits of Việt culture. This attitude is particularly evident with King Lý Phật Mã, but it also characterizes the age of which he was the most prominent figure, the age of the rise of the Lý dynasty in the eleventh century.

"Lý dynasty religion" was also "non-exclusive" in terms of ethnic origin and doctrinal orientation. Chinese, Chams, and Indians all participated in this awakening Việt identity. Different forms of Buddhist thought grew side by side, academic scholarship and rustic enlightenment, royal patronage and ascetic self-sacrifice. The prevailing tendency was to be curious rather than to control, to experiment rather than to conserve. The Vietnamese were not consciously disentangling themselves from ten centuries of Chinese rule, they were not working their way through a post-colonial reaction in the twentieth-century sense. They did not feel culturally threatened by China. They were too absorbed by the excitement of discovering and constructing

their own culture to erect barriers against any particular influence. Buddhist monks, Taoist priests, and classical literati all had positive contributions to make. Chinese renegades were as loyal to Vietnamese kings in the tenth and eleventh centuries as were home-grown worthies. It is significant that even without any conscious effort by the Lý kings to deny Chinese influence, so little of it stuck. China was a military and political problem, but not a cultural threat. Eleventh-century Vietnamese were interested in other things.

### "Quốc sư" and "thái sư"

Another important point is that any attempt to distinguish between secular and religious affairs in Lý Vietnam is not useful. In that time and place, all affairs were by definition religious. The "secular" knowledge of the Chinese classics was either not taken seriously or was subordinated to a religious frame of mind and utilized for religious purposes.

King Lý Phật Mã was often impatient with officials who cloaked their arguments in references to the Chinese classics and histories. When a group of rebellious brothers disputed his succession in 1028, an advisor, who had gone to China on a diplomatic mission in 1011, cited the precedents of T'ang Tai Tsung and Duke Tan of Chou as good rulers who killed rebellious brothers. Phật Mã replied: "Of course, I know all about T'ang Tai Tsung and Duke Tan of Chou. But I want to hide the wicked crimes of my brothers and allow them to withdraw and yield of their own volition for, of all things, my own flesh and blood is most precious!"[66] Clan solidarity was much more important to Phật Mã than classical wisdom. Similarly, when in 1039 advisors cited the golden age of Yao and Shun as a time when "the realm enjoyed great peace and good government simply from the rulers putting on robes and folding their arms", Phật Mã bridled with disgust: "I do not understand how they arrived at such a manner of government! I am a mere man, commissioned to stand above the officials and the people; I rise early and go to sleep late; it is as if I am crossing an abyss and do not yet know how to understand Heaven and earth or what virtue is required to reach the level of Yao and Shun."[67] Phật Mã was skeptical about the golden age of Yao and Shun, being convinced that the only way to govern was with constant effort. The first mention in Vietnamese sources of the term *nhô thần* ( 儒臣 ), often taken to mean "Confucianist officials", occurs in 1043, but the *nhô thần* here appear in a story of how Phật Mã miraculously caused a leaning pillar in a ruined Buddhist temple to stand upright and they were directed "to compose a rhyming narrative in order to publish this extraordinary supernatural event".[68] Once again, later in the same year when the king's shield miraculously moved of its own accord as it hung in a public hall during a time of preparation for war, court officials quoted from the Chinese classics to explain this event as an auspicious omen reflecting the influence of "divine beings" responding to Phật Mã's will.[69]

What is striking about the reigns of the early Lý kings is the degree to which the kings themselves were the focus of attention. What can be gleaned about the organization of the court reveals a very rudimentary affair with a handful of title-holders grouped around the king in an advisory capacity, some civil, some military, some religious, and a few lower-level officers charged with specific duties in the



capital or along the frontiers. Four of the six categories of taxation published in 1013 applied only to items of trade with the tribespeople in the mountains (salt, rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks, aromatic wood, lumber, flowers, and fruits); there is no evidence that the two lowland categories (which included fish, pearls, rice, and silk) were applied outside royal estates.[70] Not until 1088 were officials sent from the court to oversee the "fields, servants, storehouses, and valuables" of Buddhist temples,[71] most of which were located in the core area under the direct control of the Lý family.

This brings us to the question of the **quốc sư** and the **thái sư**. We have already noted that according to the biographies studied by Trần Văn Giáp in 1932, five monks are identified as having held the position of **quốc sư**, all notable for their erudition. One of these was Thảo Đường, a Chinese from Che Chiang, regarded as the founder of the "sect" that bore his name. One was Viên Thông, a member of the Vinītaruci "sect". The remaining three were Viên Chiếu, his disciple Thông Biện, and his disciple Biện Tài, a Chinese from Kuang Chou, all from the Vô Ngôn Thông "sect". The title **quốc sư** appears only once in the chronicles and that is in Ngô Sĩ Liên's **Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư** under the year 1088, where it is reported that a Buddhist priest named Khổ Đản, not mentioned in Trần Văn Giáp's study, was appointed **quốc sư**. This information is followed by a note:

It has been said that [the **quốc sư**] stood in the court together with the ministers of state (宰臣) to decide issues concerning worldly affairs (處斷天下事務瑣訟), but this is not necessarily true, because at that time Nhân Tôn [King Lý Cán Đức, reigned 1072-1127] venerated Buddhism and appointed the **quốc sư** to consult about state affairs (詢以國事), merely like Lê Đại Hành [King Lê Hoàn, reigned 980-1005] with Ngô Khuông Việt.[72]

Ngô Khuông Việt refers to Ngô Chân Lưu, a Buddhist priest who, according to the **Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư**, in 971 was given the title Khuông Việt đại sư (匡越大師) by Đinh Bộ Lĩnh (reigned 965-979)[73] and in 987 was consulted by Lê Hoàn about the protocol for dealing with an envoy from Sung China.[74] The title **đại sư**, "great preceptor", originated in the late T'ang period (after 860) as an honorific conferred by the emperor upon "profound and virtuous" Buddhist priests.[75] **Khuông** means "to correct, to reform, to put in order"; **Việt**, of course, refers to the Vietnamese themselves. Ngô Chân Lưu is the only person to have held the title Khuông Việt, so that when Vietnamese historians use the title Khuông Việt they do so to refer specifically to this man. Ngô Khuông Việt died in 1011 as the Lý dynasty was being established; he held the title Khuông Việt đại sư for forty years, during which time kings from three different clans successively held power. His disciple Đa Bảo was, according to the **Báo cục truyện**, a close friend and confidant of Lý Công Uẩn, but there is no evidence of his receiving a title or an appointment at court. Likewise, Lý Công Uẩn's teacher, the priest Vạn Hạnh (d. 1025), who was a prominent figure in the rise of the Lý dynasty, held no formal title or appointment, so far as is known, but he clearly exercised great influence over Lý Công Uẩn.

The earliest evidence for the title **quốc sư** is from the reign of Lý Nhật Tôn (1054-1072) and the information from Buddhist biographical

literature that it was conferred upon Thảo Dương, sometime after the Việt expedition to Champa in 1069. The quotation from 1088 cited above tells us that in the fifteenth century the Lý-dynasty **quốc sư** was understood by some as a priest who stood at the highest level of the court and had the authority to make decisions about political matters. Ngô Sĩ Liên, who was strongly anti-Buddhist, argues against this idea by mentioning the fact that the Lý king was a devout Buddhist and saying that he appointed a **quốc sư** to serve in an advisory capacity, on the model of the 987 episode involving Lê Hoàn and Ngô Khuông Việt. I suspect that Ngô Sĩ Liên was arguing against the accepted understanding of the **quốc sư** and that he thereby reveals his desire to downgrade the political role of Buddhism in the history of his country. The argument about whether the **quốc sư** held decision-making power or merely advisory authority at the court is, in any case, not germane, because it would depend upon the circumstances of each reign. During the reigns of strong adult kings, that is until 1072, no one but the king exercised decision-making authority. But, after 1072, during the reigns of immature or weak kings, royal advisors became royal decision makers.

We can translate **quốc sư** (國師) as "state preceptor". In Han China the title was used, at least once, to designate the emperor's religious teacher or mentor; the title was given to the Indian monk Kumarajiva during Western Ch'in (third and fourth centuries). It came to refer in a general way to a priest who instructed the emperor about Buddhism, and was more specifically applied at certain times as a title conferred by the emperor upon the highest-ranking priest of the Ch'an sect. The Chinese sometimes used **quốc sư** as an equivalent for **thái sư** (太師), "grand preceptor".[76]

The term **quốc sư** came to have a derogatory meaning in the eyes of the Chinese after the rise of Neo-Confucianism and was applied only to officials in neighbouring "barbarian" kingdoms who, to their way of thinking, mixed religion and politics in an unacceptable manner. This may help to explain why the term was apparently expunged from the historical record by Vietnamese historians except for a single notice that required an explanation with arguments against its significance. The Chinese understanding from Sung times was that the **quốc sư** was a "barbarian prime minister", a prime minister whose political role was an aspect of his religious role, in a kingdom where prevailing thought was religious.[77]

Judging from the court chronicles, the **thái sư** was the most important position at the Lý court in the eleventh century. The **thái sư** was the highest-ranking of the so-called "three dukes" of the Chou dynasty in antiquity, who supposedly advised the king about auspicious and unauspicious signs, followed in importance by the **thái phó** (太傅) and the **thái bảo** (太保). Lê Hoàn had appointed a **thái sư** in the 980s, a Chinese named Hồng Hiến. The **Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư** has this to say about him:

Hiến was a Northerner, well versed in the classics and histories; he usually went along on military campaigns as an advisor and had great merit in advancing plans and discussing state affairs. [Lê Hoàn] loved and trusted him.[78]

This description suggests an advisor who combined erudition with practical political ability.

In the eleventh century, only three men are identified as having

held the position of **thái sư**, though a fourth received it posthumously.[79] Upon his accession in 1028, Lý Phật Mã appointed Lương Nhậm Văn to be **thái sư**. [80] In 1010, Lương Nhậm Văn had gone to China to announce the accession of Lý Công Uẩn to the Sung court. [81] It is recorded that in 1016 he had been consulted by Lý Công Uẩn about the meaning of a dream in which the spirit of a sixth-century Vietnamese hero announced itself. [82] Judging from these details, Lương Nhậm Văn appears to have been competent in dealing with both the Chinese and the supernatural. No information has been preserved about Lương Nhậm Văn's activities as **thái sư** under Lý Phật Mã. Upon his accession in 1054, Lý Nhật Tôn appointed Lý Đạo Thành as **thái sư**. [83]

The position of **thái sư** became politically important after Nhật Tôn died in 1072, leaving Lý Càn Đức, a child, on the throne. Initially, the senior queen, not Càn Đức's mother, exercised royal authority "assisted" by Lý Đạo Thành. But within a year, Càn Đức's mother, a concubine named Ý Lan, obtained the death of the senior queen and the demotion and exile of Lý Đạo Thành. A year later, however, as war with Sung China was imminent, Lý Đạo Thành was brought back to the court and reinstated. It is tempting to assume that the real power behind Ý Lan's coup was Lý Thường Kiệt, the **thái úy** (太尉) or commander-in-chief of all military forces. This may have been the case, although there is no evidence for it. In the twelfth century, the position of **thái úy** became more important than the **thái sư**; Đỗ Anh Vũ, from 1141 to 1158, and Tô Hiến Thành, from 1159 to 1179, effectively controlled the Lý court as **thái úy**. But there is no evidence that Lý Thường Kiệt, despite his considerable military prowess, was involved in court politics during his long life (1019-1105); he spent virtually his entire career in the frontier provinces.

Another way of interpreting the events of 1072-1073 is to see a brief tussle for control of the court between the **quốc sư** and the **thái sư**, between one whose position as royal advisor was based upon mastery of Buddhism and a successful monastic career and one whose position as royal advisor was based upon mastery of the Chinese classics and histories and a successful career as a royal pedagogue. [84] But if so, this was not a difference of opinion about Buddhism, for Lý Đạo Thành was a devout Buddhist himself. In fact, if there were any factors other than the jealousy of Ý Lan, I doubt that they were serious or that they represented any kind of fundamental difficulty at the court. Lý Đạo Thành's prompt reinstatement suggests that the chronicle may be correct in attributing his demotion to nothing more than a fit of jealousy. The court was adjusting to a child king and at the same time preparing for a Chinese invasion. Lý Đạo Thành's activities during the 1070s are unaccountable if we insist on some sort of "secular" versus "religious" conflict.

In 1070, as Nhật Tôn began to fail, the Temple of Literature (Văn miếu 文廟), probably originally built by the Chinese in T'ang times, was "repaired" and "reformed". Clay images of the Duke of Chou, Confucius, and Confucius' four best disciples were set up, along with painted images of seventy-two of Confucius' lesser disciples. Seasonal sacrifices were instituted, and the Crown Prince Càn Đức was sent there to study. [85] The image of the Duke of Chou suggests preparation for the impending minority of Càn Đức, for the Duke of Chou was famous for his loyal service to a child king in antiquity. The impression I receive is that by refurbishing the Temple of Literature with a statue

of the Duke of Chou and sending the four-year-old Crown Prince to "study" there at a time when the king was in broken health and near death, Lý Đạo Thành was drawing attention to the importance of loyalty to the royal clan. A child had never before successfully succeeded to the Vietnamese throne. The Chinese classics were accepted as a storehouse of wisdom about how to conduct public affairs. In an age of limited literacy, a Temple of Literature would be an architectural "book" with a practical message about how to maintain the state during a difficult time. The message was "be loyal to this child as the Duke of Chou was loyal to young King Ch'êng and our state, like the Chou, will endure for centuries". After Nhật Tôn's death, Lý Đạo Thành offered sacrifices to Mount Tản-viên, sacred in Vietnamese mythical lore as the abode of powerful protector spirits; he celebrated the young king's birthday festival, an event established by Lê Hoàn in 985 and followed by every king since then, which provided an occasion to encourage loyalty and demonstrate wealth and power by bestowing royal largess upon politically important figures in the realm; he selected two queens for the young king, following the precedent of royal polygamy established by Đinh Bộ Lĩnh in the tenth century; he arranged for the young king to attend a "Buddha bathing festival"; he had a Buddha statue brought to the capital from a temple across the Hồng River so that prayers by members of the court for "clear skies" could be addressed to it; and he published an edict calling for Buddhist priests to submit poetry for judging to select persons to serve as clerks.[86]

In exile during 1073-1074, in the southern province of Nghệ-an, Lý Đạo Thành established a garden at the provincial "Temple of Literature" and dedicated it to the bodhisattva Ksitagarbha; a Buddha statue was erected in the middle of the garden with an ancestral tablet for Nhật Tôn where Đạo Thành offered his respects at "dawn and dusk".[87] Ksitagarbha is the bodhisattva believed to be responsible for instructing the unfortunate souls who live in the age of darkness, from the Buddha's death until the arrival of Maitreya, the "buddha of the future".[88] Lý Đạo Thành here seems to see himself as labouring in the dark age from Nhật Tôn's death to Càn Đức's maturity. He wants to instruct his contemporaries about how to survive this difficult time and take comfort from the bodhisattva for his task.

In 1075, after his reinstatement, Lý Đạo Thành administered a series of examinations at three levels "to select senior graduates familiar with the classics and with broad learning". A scholar named Lê Văn Thịnh received highest honours and was assigned to be the young king's tutor.[89] The subsequent rapid rise of Lê Văn Thịnh suggests that he was already a man of influence and raises questions about what sort of "examination" this was; from 1075, he was groomed to be Lý Đạo Thành's successor. In 1076, "worthy men with civil and military ability" were selected "to govern the army people [quân dân 軍民]", and "civil officials acquainted with letters" were selected to enter the Imperial Academy (Quốc tử giám 國子監).[90] In 1077, an examination was held for officials in "letters and laws".[91] All of these "examinations" and "selections" came in the midst of war with China as the Viêts were mobilizing their forces and absorbing the shock of a Chinese invasion. At the height of the crisis, in early 1077, Buddhist priests were assembled at the capital to recite the Nhân-vương sutra,

"Sutra on the benevolent kings", traditionally recited to avert disaster.[92]

Lý Đạo Thành died in 1081, and as Càn Đức came of age he was surrounded by the proteges of Lý Đạo Thành who had risen through the wartime exams and appointments of 1075, 1076, and 1077, chief of whom was Lê Văn Thịnh. Lê Văn Thịnh, whose tomb has recently been discovered and excavated,[93] was **thái sư** from 1085 to 1096, and he appears to be a figure who attempted to enforce a new measure of centralization and administrative control but failed. In 1076, one year after passing the "examination", at the height of the military confrontation with China, he had been given charge of the "War Ministry".[94] In 1084, just before his appointment as **thái sư**, he was involved in border negotiations with Sung China;[95] we know from the Chinese side that he was a very stubborn and clever man.[96] His record as **thái sư** reveals an activist. He undoubtedly built on the wartime momentum achieved under Lý Đạo Thành when the court was expanded to mobilize armies and supplies. In 1086, a Hàn-lâm academy (翰林院) was set up and an examination was held to staff it with one "academician" (học sĩ 學士) selected as its head.[97] In 1087, a "privy council" (bí thư gác (秘書閣)) was set up.[98] In 1088, Buddhist temples were ranked in three categories according to size and officials were appointed to oversee them.[99] In 1089, some kind of reorganization of the court is recorded.[100] In 1092, the "field tax" was revised.[101] In 1096, Lê Văn Thịnh was found guilty of plotting to murder the king; his death sentence was remitted and he was exiled to spend the rest of his life at a frontier outpost in the mountains.[102] His tomb bears no trace of a coffin or a corpse or of a cremation, so Vietnamese archaeologists assume that he was never buried in the place he had prepared for himself.[103] The significance of this obscure episode may be that the centralizing propensities of Lê Văn Thịnh threatened to destabilize the Lý dynastic consensus. The position of **thái sư** does not again appear to have been as important as it was in the time of Lý Đạo Thành and Lê Văn Thịnh. There is no further evidence of "examinations" during the Lý dynasty. It is probable that the activities of Lý Đạo Thành and Lê Văn Thịnh were magnified or distorted by later generations of Neo-Confucian historians.

What I hope to have gained by this comment on the **quốc sư** and the **thái sư** is some perspective on the administrative history of the Lý dynasty and a realistic framework in which to discuss the significance of religious thought as a factor in the authority of the Lý dynasty. The **thái sư** and the **quốc sư**, "grand preceptor" and "state preceptor", were the leaders of two groups of advisors at the court. One group, that of the **quốc sư**, was responsible for educating the crown prince in the Buddhist religion, and its influence on the king probably depended upon the intensity of the king's devotion to the Buddha. The other group, that of the **thái sư**, was responsible for educating the crown prince in the Chinese classics and histories, and whatever influence it may have had over the king probably depended upon the manner in which the king had responded to this education.

We must resist the temptation to jump to the conclusion that the **thái sư** and his people were a kind of "secular" influence as opposed to the more "religious" influence of the **quốc sư**. Lý Đạo Thành's career and the 1088 note about the **quốc sư** reveal that the **thái sư** was a devout Buddhist and that the **quốc sư** could take a hand in political affairs.

All public affairs in Lý Vietnam by definition had religious significance. The **thái sư** did not emerge from the shadow of the throne until 1072, during the first of a series of royal minorities, and then the **thái sư's** influence prevailed only until the young king had come of age and began to make decisions for himself. In the twelfth century, power passed into the hands of strong maternal (queens') clans who used the position of **thái úy**, commander-in-chief of the military forces, to dominate the court. The role of the **quốc sư** has been slighted, apparently with deliberate design, by the court chroniclers of later generations, and what we can say about it must be largely inferential. Judging from the 1088 note, how the Chinese have traditionally understood the term, and what we know of eleventh-century Vietnam, the influence of the **quốc sư** or other royal advisors from the Buddhist monkhood was, in my estimation, the dominant influence at the Lý court, even when people not directly associated with the monkhood were making the decisions.

### "Bảo cực truyện"

Let us return to the **Bảo cực truyện**. We have already noted that our knowledge of this work comes from citations in the **Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục** and the **Việt điện u linh tập**. The **Việt điện u linh tập** is a compilation of tales about the "spiritual powers of the Việt realm" with a preface dated 1329 by Lý Tế Xuyên.[104] Lý Tế Xuyên, was "keeper of the Tripitaka" (Thủ đại tạng 守大藏) and he understood his compilation as an "authentic record" about "the mysterious affairs of the spirit". He was interested in "godly beings ... worthy of being worshipped with temples and sacrifices" as opposed to "depraved divinities, evil spirits, and wild demons". He believed that "godly beings" were "not equal in their merits", and "if their deeds are not authentically recorded, then it is difficult to distinguish between those of small merit and those of great merit". He selected twenty-eight spirits as being of "great merit" and recorded all available information about them. His selection was based upon spirits that had been honoured by the Vietnamese court during and after the Mongol-Yüan invasions of the 1280s as having been loyal and efficacious against the foe.

Thirteen of the twenty-eight spirits in the **Việt điện u linh tập** are associated with the four Lý kings of the eleventh century; six of these thirteen are associated with Lý Phật Mã. No other historical era stands out so prominently as a heroic age in the **Việt điện u linh tập** as the era of the early Lý kings, particularly the reign of Lý Phật Mã. Judging from the **Việt điện u linh tập**, ruling-class Vietnamese at the turn of the fourteenth century saw the eleventh century as a time when the spirits that protected their land were born or revealed themselves. The early Lý kings were seen as men who called these spirits forth.

The **Việt điện u linh tập** cites information from the **Bảo cực truyện** for five spirits, three of them associated with the first three Lý kings. I would now like to look at what survives of the **Bảo cực truyện** and to consider whether we are justified in detecting a point of view attributable to it. The **Cổ-châu Pháp-vân phật bản hành ngữ lục** cites the **Bảo cực truyện** for information about the introduction of Buddhism into Vietnam by Indian missionaries arriving from the south at the turn of the third century A.D.[105] At that time, Vietnam was governed by Sĩ

Nhiếp, a Han official who cultivated a regional power base in Vietnam when Han collapsed. Sĩ Nhiếp's forty-year rule is remembered as a time of peace, prosperity, and cultural ferment in which Vietnamese Buddhism had its origin.

Sĩ Nhiếp is one of the spirits included in the *Việt điện u linh tập*. After citing Sĩ Nhiếp's biography from the *San kuo chíh*, a Chinese history, Lý Tế Xuyên cites the *Báo cục truyện* for a story about the development of Sĩ Nhiếp's spirit cult after Cham invaders opened his tomb near the end of the fourth century; the Chams were astonished to find Sĩ Nhiếp's corpse undecomposed. Furthermore, Sĩ Nhiếp's spirit reportedly appeared to Kao P'ien, a T'ang general who defeated invading Nan Chao armies in Vietnam in the 860s, and was thought to have helped P'ien in his battles.[106]

Sĩ Nhiếp was regarded as a "king" by later Vietnamese historians, and since he was thought to have fostered the introduction of Buddhism into Vietnam, Vietnamese Buddhists may have seen him as a kind of ideal Buddhist king. Kao P'ien was also recorded as a "king" by the Vietnamese of later generations, who credited him with saving the realm from Nan Chao marauders and initiating an era of peace; Kao P'ien was also famous as a patron of religion and "the spirits", and Sĩ Nhiếp's association with him may suggest that the two men were seen by Vietnamese Buddhists as prototypes of a good king. Information about another spirit in the *Việt điện u linh tập*, cited from the *Báo cục truyện*, seems to associate Lý Công Uẩn with this tradition of kingship.

The *Việt điện u linh tập* cites the *Báo cục truyện* for the story about Tô Lịch, a man who reportedly lived during the Chín dynasty (280-420) in the vicinity of Đại-la/Thăng-long/Hanoi.[107] The river flowing through Hanoi is still called the Tô-lịch River. This area did not become politically prominent until the Sui-T'ang era. In the seventh century, the central government in Vietnam was moved here and a city wall was built. This wall was overrun by rebels or marauders in 687, 722, and 767. In the ninth century, T'ang efforts to repair or expand this wall were consistently resisted by local powers. T'ang governors were killed or driven out in 803, 819, 828, 843, 860, and 863. In the 820s, T'ang governor Li Yüan-hsi moved the capital. According to the *Việt điện u linh tập*, he moved because of an "inauspicious river current" on the north side of the wall.[108]

The site selected by Li Yüan-hsi for his new wall was at Tô Lịch's old dwelling place. Li Yüan-hsi accordingly named Tô Lịch the guardian spirit of his wall and honoured Tô Lịch's spirit with a shrine and sacrifices. Tô Lịch then appeared to Li Yüan-hsi in a dream and exhorted him to govern the people correctly. When Kao P'ien rebuilt and expanded this wall in 866, after the Nan Chao War, he heard of the story about Tô Lịch and Li Yüan-hsi and made Tô Lịch the guardian spirit of his new city, honouring the spirit with ceremonial sacrifices.[109]

The information up to this point about the establishment of Tô Lịch's cult as the guardian spirit of Đại-la by Li Yüan-hsi and Kao P'ien was seemingly taken from Tseng Kun's *Giao châu ký*, for a *Giao châu ký* is cited by the *Việt điện u linh tập* with the *Báo cục truyện* as if it had been cited by the *Báo cục truyện*. Tseng Kun was Kao P'ien's aide-de-camp during the Nan Chao War. He was later governor at Đại-la, serving in Vietnam from 866 to 880. His non-extant *Giao châu ký*,

apparently a collection of T'ang-Việt lore, is cited by the **Việt điện u linh tập** for one other spirit aside from Tô Lịch.

The **Báo cục truyện** adds a reference to Lý Công Uẩn to the above story. When Công Uẩn moved his capital to Đại-La and renamed it Thăng-long, Tô Lịch announced himself to Công Uẩn in a dream, and Công Uẩn subsequently made him the guardian spirit of his capital.[110]

The **Báo cục truyện** thus associates Công Uẩn with a tradition of kingship, or at least a tradition of being favoured by the guardian spirit of the capital city, in which Kao P'ien and at least one other ninth-century T'ang governor also stood. Adding to this the **Báo cục truyện**'s association of Kao P'ien with Sĩ Nhiếp, it is possible to imagine a concept of kingship that saw Công Uẩn inheriting a royal tradition that had its beginning with Sĩ Nhiếp. This possibility is strengthened by the consideration that Sĩ Nhiếp, Kao P'ien, and Công Uẩn all reportedly patronized the Buddhist religion in Vietnam, and the **Báo cục truyện** expresses a Buddhist point of view. This becomes clearer with a look at the earth spirit of Phù-đồng, cited from the **Báo cục truyện** by the **Việt điện u linh tập**.

The Kiến-sở monastery in the village of Phù-đồng, a few miles north of Thăng-long across the Hồng River, was where, in 820, the Vô Ngôn Thông "sect" had been founded by an aged Chinese monk and his Vietnamese disciple.[111] According to the **Báo cục truyện**, this monastery "later fell into ruin; the local people consulted witches and wizards on miscellaneous matters and, going to excess, became licentious in their sacrificial observances".[112] This is probably a reference to the troubled times after the fall of T'ang, particularly during the Hoa-lư period, when political authority was weak, divided, or seated in a remote place.

This era of decadence, according to the **Báo cục truyện**, continued until the Buddhist priest Đa Bảo, a disciple of Khuông Việt and a patriarch of the Vô Ngôn Thông "sect", while "assisting" Lý Công Uẩn during Công Uẩn's "concealed dragon time", saw the situation at Phù-đồng and "wanted to put an end to it".[113] Mention of Công Uẩn's "concealed dragon time" is a reference to the period of Công Uẩn's career before his enthronement. The information that Đa Bảo was "assisting" him at that time suggests that Công Uẩn stood at the head of a cultural and religious movement that was active for some time before he actually took the throne. An important part of this movement, according to the **Báo cục truyện**, was the restoration of monastic life that had been debased by "witches and wizards" going to "licentious excess".

Đa Bảo's reform of the Kiến-sở monastery, where the Vô Ngôn Thông "sect" had been founded, is associated with the local earth spirit, whose shrine was located at the right-hand side of the monastery gate. It was common to build Buddhist temples and monasteries beside the shrines of earth spirits, for these spirits were often invoked as protectors of the Buddhist religion. Đa Bảo reportedly "stimulated his energy" under a big tree in front of the spirit shrine; this is a reference to his invoking the spirit by some kind of ascetic practice. Đa Bảo called out:

Who can protect the Buddha Law?  
Be content to dwell in the monastery;  
If you will not defend the Buddha Law,  
Then quickly depart for another place.[114]



Đa Bảo was inviting the earth spirit to enter the monastery and become a protector of the Buddhist religion. In the third line, he implies that the earth spirit has not been fulfilling its duty to defend the Buddhist religion, a reference to the ruined condition of the monastery and the decadent practices that appeared. In the last line, Đa Bảo raises the threat of exorcism if the spirit should refuse to cooperate with a reformation of the monastery.

After chanting these lines while "consulting omens" for several nights in succession, Đa Bảo heard a voice answer from out of the air:

The Buddha Law is extremely compassionate;  
The spirits are covered by Heaven and supported by earth.  
I desire to follow steadfastly the monastic life;  
The elders will protect the monasteries.[115]

Here, the spirit affirmed its respect for the Buddhist religion and its willingness to enter the monastery. In the second line, it explains that the spirits are under the authority of Heaven and dependent upon the worship of living people on earth; this seems to say that the spirit could resist neither Đa Bảo's moral appeal or Đa Bảo's respectful attitude. The spirit recognized the leadership of "elders" such as Đa Bảo. Đa Bảo responded to the spirit's affirmative reply by raising an altar and sacrificing to it.

Đa Bảo thus reformed the monastery under the protection of the earth spirit. Reformation is important in evaluating the relationship between Lý Công Uẩn and the monkhood. Công Uẩn twice proclaimed rules and regulations for those entering the monkhood.[116] The purpose of this was surely to raise the moral and intellectual standards of the monkhood and to remedy situations such as Đa Bảo found at Phù-đồng.

The **Báo cục truyện** goes on to say that Công Uẩn and Đa Bảo enjoyed "mutual affection" and that Công Uẩn often came to the monastery to visit the patriarch. During one such visit, a "white book" appeared at the big tree before the shrine with the following lines written on it:

Imperial virtue illuminates all under Heaven;  
Imperial prestige guards the eight points of the compass.  
The spirits are granted favour;  
The great kindness of this visit soars to Heaven.[117]

Taking note of this, Công Uẩn proclaimed the spirit "Soaring to Heaven Spirit King", and "the white book suddenly disappeared". Considering this to be an omen, Công Uẩn ordered that an image of the spirit be made and he then offered sacrifices to it.[118]

The oracle above amounts to a blessing of Công Uẩn's reign. Công Uẩn "illuminated" the realm with his "virtue" and "guarded" the frontiers with his "prestige". Furthermore, he "granted favour" to the spirits. Of course, spirits that received royal favour were expected to respond with loyal service. This implies a reformation of the spirits through the "virtuous" leadership of Công Uẩn and people like Đa Bảo. The spirits, in practical terms, represented local traditions. The story of Công Uẩn, Đa Bảo, and the earth spirit at Phù-đồng is about a cultural and religious reformation centered on the Buddhist monasteries and the royal court.

The perspective of the **Báo cục truyện** as described thus far indicates an affirmation of Lý Công Uẩn as a type of ideal Buddhist king who reforms and protects the monkhood by eliciting the assistance of the

supernatural beings dwelling in the land. The two remaining tales cited from the **Báo cực truyện** by Lý Tế Xuyên seem to apply this affirmation to Phật Mã and Nhật Tôn, Công Uẩn's son and grandson.

The **Báo cực truyện** is cited by the **Việt điện u linh tập** as the source of information about the spirit of Mount **Đông-cổ**, a peak in Thanh-hóa. When Công Uẩn sent Phật Mã to attack Champa in 1020, Phật Mã was visited by the spirit of this mountain as he passed by it on his way south. The spirit indicated that he would help Phật Mã against the Chams. When Phật Mã's campaign turned out to be a great success, he attributed this to the spirit's assistance and subsequently built a shrine at Thăng-long for it to dwell in. When Công Uẩn died, the spirit appeared to Phật Mã warning him of fraternal treachery, allowing him time to bring more soldiers to the capital. When Phật Mã established the annual oath of loyalty in 1028, it was done at this spirit's shrine.[119]

The importance of the spirit of Mount **Đông-cổ** is that it protected dynastic succession and became the guarantor of loyalty to the Lý line. It, in effect, extended the benefits of Công Uẩn's achievement beyond his lifetime by nurturing the idea of dynastic continuity. Like the earth spirit of **Phù-đồng**, the mountain spirit of **Đông-cổ** can be interpreted as a guardian spirit of the Buddhist religion, for it nurtured the ordered authority within which Buddhism could prosper.

The remaining spirit cited from the **Báo cực truyện** by Lý Tế Xuyên is from the reign of Nhật Tôn. According to this story, a great storm held up Nhật Tôn's 1069 expedition to Champa at a certain point on the southern coast. A woman appeared to Nhật Tôn in a dream and said: "I am the earth spirit of this place. I have been dwelling namelessly in a tree for a long time, biding my time, and now I have come forth; if you are able to sacrifice to me, not only will your attack on Champa be successful but also your kingdom will prosper". The spirit was suggesting that Nhật Tôn find her dwelling place so that he could sacrifice to her, thereby gaining her assistance. Nhật Tôn consulted with his advisors about the dream, and a Buddhist priest named Huệ Lâm proposed that a search be made of the nearby forests for the tree where she was dwelling. Nhật Tôn ordered a search and shortly a tree was found in the shape of the woman Nhật Tôn had seen in the dream. When the tree was set up in Nhật Tôn's boat, the storm abated and the expedition proceeded. On his return, Nhật Tôn built a shrine at the place where the tree had been found. When a sudden storm prevented Nhật Tôn from continuing his return journey, Huệ Lâm advised that he announce his intention of bringing the spirit to Thăng-long. When he did so, the storm departed. Nhật Tôn subsequently built a shrine for the spirit at Thăng-long, naming it **Hậu-thổ Phu-nhân**, "Imperial Earth Lady".[120]

**Hậu-thổ Phu-nhân** was the name of a popular goddess in parts of T'ang China; a famous T'ang sorcerer who specialized in her cult once recommended one of his proteges to Kao P'ien.[121] It may have been that the cult of **Hậu-thổ Phu-nhân** (后土夫人) was introduced into Vietnam by Tang officials from China and that, by the time of Nhật Tôn, this cult had been reduced to a literary style capable of being attributed to a spirit such as the one encountered by Nhật Tôn. It is significant that a Buddhist priest was associated with the establishment of this cult. It is also significant to recall that Nhật Tôn used a Chinese monk captured in Champa to found a new Buddhist sect, of

which he himself became a patriarch. According to temple records signalled by Gustave Dumoutier a century ago, Nhật Tôn raised a cult to the Chinese "God of War" at Thăng-long that was superimposed on the spirit cults of indigenous heroes, all under the umbrella of the Buddhist religion.[122] It is therefore not surprising to find the name of a T'ang goddess being applied to a Vietnamese earth spirit by Nhật Tôn.

The significance of this cult in the context of the **Báo cục truyện** seems to lie in the spirit being roused from its reverie in the tree by Nhật Tôn's appearance and in the spirit's promise that Nhật Tôn's "kingdom will prosper". Like Công Uẩn and Phật Mã, Nhật Tôn is portrayed as a man of sufficient virtue to awaken a powerful spirit able to bring benefit to the realm.

The **Báo cục truyện**, written shortly after the death of Nhật Tôn, sees the reigns of the first three Lý kings as a time when the capital was established and monastic life was reformed under the protection of powerful spirits aroused by virtuous royal authority. This suggests that Buddhists in eleventh-century Vietnam fully accepted the world of indigenous spirits and, moreover, placed the "Buddha Law" under the protection of these spirits. The Lý kings restored religion in cooperation with powerful spirits of the land.

An implication of this is that Buddhism existed within the larger sphere of indigenous animist worship. At the beginning of his reign, Công Uẩn ordered the repair of all ruined Buddhist monasteries and Taoist (spirit) temples. The mention of "Taoist priests" in the reign of Phật Mã is surely a reference to men skilled in dealing with the local spirit world. Beginning late in the eleventh century, after the time of the **Báo cục truyện** judging from the monastic reform of 1088 when monastic wealth was placed under the supervision of the court, Buddhism probably became less dependent on the indigenous spirit world as the economic and political power of the monasteries became firmly established. But, during the first several decades of the eleventh century, as monks laboured against what they interpreted as spiritual decadence, the indigenous spirit world loomed rather large.

It is possible to see the eleventh century as the time when Buddhism "broke through" the protective shield of the spirit world, when for the first time in history, Vietnamese society as a whole advanced beyond the animist perspective of the indigenous spirit cults. The **Báo cục truyện** shows Buddhism pulling itself up by grasping sturdy rungs in the spirit world, and the Lý kings played the central role in this process.

Vietnamese Buddhism up to the tenth century never seems to have gone far beyond the animist perspective, except in a few individual cases of particularly studious monks. With the rise of Lý Công Uẩn, Buddhism began to "domesticate" the spirits. Đa Bảo told the earth spirit at Phù-đồng to either cooperate with the Buddhist religion or leave. Buddhists could not ignore the spirits. They either had to chase them off or bring them in as guardians of the "Buddha Law".

#### Royal "virtue" and royal "majesty"

Surviving citations from the **Báo cục truyện** provide what may be considered the most contemporary view of eleventh-century Vietnam. It was a world of virtuous kings, reforming monks, and powerful spirits.

Furthermore, the vision of the Lý kings that is reflected in the *Bảo cực truyện* reveals an interesting pattern of thought regarding the nature of their authority and the legitimacy of their claim to kingship. The kings possess moral virtues that attract the attention of powerful spirits that are potential patrons of royal authority. These spirits announce themselves to the kings and declare themselves as supporters of royal authority. The kings respond with appropriate acts of worship. This entire pattern of thought is founded upon the moral appeal of the Lý kings and the assumed supernatural implications of this appeal.

Here is a good clue for understanding authority and legitimacy in eleventh-century Vietnam, a clue suggesting to me that "Lý dynasty religion" was a religion focused upon the role of *virtuous* kings, whose civilizing task was to bring a new harmony between the supernatural and temporal powers of the land. And I suspect that the idea of spirits announcing themselves to the kings reflects the distinctive Vietnamese experience of self-discovery, an eleventh-century version of modern "nation building".

In 1009, Vạn Hạnh is reported to have urged Lý Công Uẩn to take the throne with the following words:

... if one considers all the clans in the realm, the Lý clan is the largest, without equal. You are magnanimous and compassionate, virtuous and merciful, able to gain the affections of the officers and to control the soldiers. Who beside you is able to be sovereign of the people?[123]

This statement tells us two things. One is in a practical vein; the Lý clan was already recognized as the most powerful in the land. Considering that Lý Công Uẩn was reportedly a temple orphan and had been adopted into the Lý clan, we might be justified in supposing that the Lý clan was the "political front" for monastic interests, that it was a clan into whose leadership the monasteries channelled their more politically astute students. The second point of interest in this statement is an affirmation that Lý Công Uẩn could project a morally appealing image in terms of prevailing standards as preached by the Buddhist priests. This emphasis on virtue is the essential starting point for the rationalization of Lý authority and legitimacy. Without it, the spirits would not be galvanized to announce themselves and there would be no merit in loyal service to the throne.

The *Bảo cực truyện* is not the only source to reflect this pattern of thought for eleventh-century Vietnam. The court chronicles reflect the same perspective. But, the authority of the Lý kings was based upon more than moral appeal; the early Lý kings were noted for being good soldiers and many military campaigns are recorded. The vital point, however, is that these campaigns were almost exclusively made on the frontiers of Việt society and cannot be interpreted as the suppression of regional Việt powers. In fact, there is evidence to show that by mobilizing Việt society against neighbouring non-Việt kingdoms and tribes, the Lý were making object lessons of them for the edification of local Việt powers too strong to be impressed in any other way.

In 1043, Lý Phật Mã asked his advisors why Champa had not been sending tribute. The reply is recorded as follows:

We think the cause of this is that, although your virtue has reached them, your majesty has not yet spread far. The reason

for this is that, ever since you ascended the throne, while they have rebelliously refused to come to court, you simply displayed virtue and bestowed favour in order to soothe them. You have not yet proven the truth of your majesty, glory, and military power by attacking them. This is not the way to show majesty to distant peoples. We fear that the different clans and nobles in the realm will all become like Champa. Why make an exception for Champa?[124]

The advisors see no fundamental difference between domestic clans, nobles at court, and neighbouring kingdoms. If Phật Mã allows a foreign kingdom to show disrespect, this will encourage domestic powers to show disrespect. In order to maintain discipline at home, impudent neighbours must be chastised. I am convinced that there were weighty domestic political reasons for the many attacks upon Champa in the eleventh century, often led by the king in person, and that these reasons point to kings that maintained loyalty at home by, among other means, demonstrations of force along the frontiers.

I do not mean to suggest a contradiction between the significance of what I have called "Lý dynasty religion" and the practical effect of these "demonstrations of force". I strongly suspect that eleventh-century Vietnamese perceived no contradiction; for them, supernatural sanctions and battlefield prowess were closely connected. The eleventh-century expeditions to Champa were recorded in a manner designed to glorify the supernatural powers of the kings; they also afforded excitement to adventurous Việt clansmen and generated vast amounts of booty that fostered a mood of contentment. Returning from Champa in 1044 with thousands of prisoners, tens of captured elephants, and great stores of "gold, silver, and precious things", [125] Phật Mã announced:

Expeditions to distant lands interfere with and take away from agricultural work. Yet this winter we have an abundant harvest! If the people already have enough, then what do I lack? Therefore, half of this year's taxes are excused so the people can rest from their labours.[126]

The implication is clear that the Lý kings used warfare to enrich more than to intimidate their followers.

For an even more telling statement of justification for war, let us turn to the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*. At the beginning of his reign, in 1011 and 1012, Lý Công Uẩn raised "six armies", a conventional cliché, and, with a personal bodyguard of five hundred men, marched into the southern provinces of what is today Thanh-hóa and Nghệ-an, burning recalcitrant villages and capturing rebel leaders.[127] As he and his soldiers were returning north by sea, their fleet was suddenly struck by a fierce storm. Lý Công Uẩn lit incense and called on Heaven, saying:

I am a man of small virtue, ashamed to rule over the people, afflicted with fear and trembling, as if about to sink into an abyss; I dare not rely on soldiers to recklessly intimidate and make war. But, because the people of Diễn [Nghệ-an] Province did not honour civilizing instructions (教諭) and the wickedness of their outrageously stupid, cruel, and barbarous oppression of innocent people overflowed without pause, I could not bear to refrain from attacking them. When the attack was made, perhaps the loyal and filial died in

vain, or the good and virtuous were injured by mistake, so that High Heaven has now risen in a towering rage to make known its judgment on these transgressions. If I should meet with disaster, I will have no regrets about it; but as for the Six Armies, their offense can probably be forgiven, so let it be weighed in the mind of God.[128]

This speech had its desired effect and the storm departed.

Lý Công Uẩn expressed a perception of moral contradictions that seems to have been characteristic of his contemplative nature. Good men can die in vain for a righteous cause. This suggests a realistic view of violence that is close to the Buddhist reverence for life. He nevertheless accepted the risks of leadership, albeit with "fear and trembling", and was prepared to bear full responsibility for the moral consequences of what he saw as a necessary political act.

Lý Công Uẩn's speech in the storm is significant for its assumption that there is a direct relationship between the supernatural realm of the spirits and human affairs. The storm did not arise by chance. It came as a judgment from Heaven upon deeds committed by men. At the same time, Heaven could be moved to suspend judgment through an honest appeal from a sincere heart. This brings into focus the intensely religious outlook of the early Lý kings. They believed without any doubt that supernatural intervention in human affairs was the fundamental basis of life. This was not Buddhist so much as an elaboration of animist beliefs rooted in ancient mythical traditions. This helps explain why later historians called Lý Công Uẩn "superstitious". It may also help explain the tremendous energy and confidence of the early Lý kings, who twice ravaged Champa and eagerly tested swords with Sung China. They believed that their authority was sanctioned by Heaven and the myriad spirits of their land.

Lý Công Uẩn faults the rebels for not honouring "civilizing instructions". Is this a reference to Buddhism or to royal authority? Probably to both, and to the pantheon of Việt spirits galvanized to action by the combination of Buddhist piety and royal virtue exemplified by Lý Công Uẩn. But as interesting as their content is the very idea of issuing "civilizing instructions" and what this implies about Lý authority and legitimacy. Lý Công Uẩn claimed to want more than mere sullen obedience; he wanted to teach his people a better way of life, to civilize them. Perhaps we will not be too far astray if we try to define "civilization" in this context as "Việt-ness" in the way it was in the process of being understood at the Lý court during the course of the eleventh century.

Lý Công Uẩn's appeal to Heaven in fact sounds suspiciously like a justification of his pacification campaign for the benefit of those of his followers who may have had doubts. He disarms criticism by posing as a humble, nearly frightened, man bearing responsibility almost more than he can bear. Yet he boldly stands as the lightning rod of divine wrath to protect those who have been obedient to him. It is an impressive performance and the recording of this episode was surely meant to impress men as well as Heaven. The men it was meant to impress were surely those who may have been tempted to resist any assertion of royal power on frontier battlefields, powerful clans in control of different parts of the Hồng River plain. Heaven was satisfied with Lý Công Uẩn's explanation. Should not men also be satisfied?

An excellent example of all that we have been discussing appears in the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* under the year 1016. An earthquake prompted Lý Công Uẩn to travel throughout the land making sacrifices to all the rivers and mountains. At a ferry crossing between the capital and the mountains, he paused to admire the scenery and to sacrifice to the rivers and mountains of the area. As he did so, he felt the "auspicious influence" of the place and was moved to give thanks to the spirits. Scattering wine on the earth as a sacrifice, he said: "I see that here the mountains are wonderfully strange and the rivers are beautiful; if there is any hero or earth spirit dwelling here, may it receive this sacrifice." That night a man appeared to Lý Công Uẩn in a dream and identified himself as Lý Phục Man, a general of Lý Bí, the sixth-century Vietnamese leader, who had been a native of that place. Lý Phục Man explained that, after his death, God had appointed him to remain on duty to protect the lowlands against marauders from the mountains. The spirit went on to say that he was glad to meet the king, Lý Công Uẩn, after being on duty for such a long time and added: "When the realm lies in darkness, the names of loyal ministers are hidden, but at noon, when all is illuminated, who cannot see their forms?" When he awoke, Lý Công Uẩn consulted his advisors and the omens and decided to have images of Lý Phục Man set up at shrines in every province for yearly sacrifices.[129]

There are a couple of points worth mentioning in relation to this story. One is the idea that Lý Phục Man was assigned to guard the realm by God, or the supreme divine being. This clearly reveals that the early Lý kings believed their actions were sanctioned by the highest spiritual powers. But, more than this, Lý Phục Man was on duty during the many years when there was no earthly power worthy of his service. This suggests the notion of there being not only a spiritual counterpart to the temporal realm, but also that this spiritual realm existed whether or not the world of living men was capable of realizing it on earth. The symbolism of darkness and light, basic to all religious thought, is used to explain why only now were living men able to see the loyal service of Lý Phục Man. Lý Công Uẩn's virtuous deeds and respect for the spirits had dispelled the darkness and illumined the spirit world. Men could now see in real life what heretofore had been hidden in the darkness. This darkness was a symbol of ignorance and disrespect for the spirits and of a state of affairs in the realm that was not in harmony with the spirit world; this darkness may also have symbolized the ignorance of the Vietnamese people about their own heroes and cultural heritage. The meaning of the story about Lý Công Uẩn and Lý Phục Man is that the temporal and spiritual realms were now in harmony. As if to celebrate this happy conjunction of heavenly and earthly powers, that year's harvest (1016) was so good that Lý Công Uẩn published a three-year remission of all taxes,[130] something unthinkable if there had been a bureaucratic administration to feed.

### Đỗ Thiên's "Sử Ký"

Lý Phục Man is one of the spirits in the *Việt điện u linh tập*. The *Việt điện u linh tập* cites information about Lý Phục Man from an early twelfth-century work, no longer extant, entitled *Sử Ký*, "Historical Records", by Đỗ Thiên, a courtier mentioned in the chronicles under the year 1127. Đỗ Thiên lived in a time when the Lý kings were no longer

competent rulers and so it is not surprising that surviving information attributed to the *Sử Ký* exemplifies the loyal minister, rather than the king himself, as the embodiment of virtue. Six of the ten spirits for which information is cited from the *Sử ký* by the *Việt điện u linh tập* either originated during the eleventh century or were prominent cult figures at that time. We have already mentioned Lý Phục Man. A second spirit from the sixth century that was patronized in the eleventh century was really two spirits, but in cult terms they were treated as a single spirit. These were the Trương brothers, [131] noted for their loyalty to Triệu Quang Phục, the sixth-century Vietnamese hero. A shrine was built for their cult by a tenth-century king beside the Cầu River, which became a battlefield when Sung China invaded in 1076-1077. On the eve of battle, a poem was reportedly sung in the shrine as an oracle from Heaven predicting victory. [132]

Another spirit in the *Việt điện u linh tập* for whom information is cited from Đỗ Thiên's *Sử ký* is Phạm Cự Lạng, a general of Lê Hoàn who was prominent during the 980 Sung invasion. According to the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, in 1037 Lý Phật Mã was troubled by problems in administering justice, so he bathed, burned incense, and called upon God (天帝). That night, in a dream, a heavenly messenger appeared and handed him an appointment from the Supreme Being (上帝) for Phạm Cự Lạng to be lord of the royal prison and its court of justice. Phật Mã accordingly conferred a posthumous title on Phạm Cự Lạng and built a shrine for his cult. [133] The administration of justice was a frequent object of concern and reform during the eleventh century. In 1040, Phật Mã put his seventeen-year-old Crown Prince, Nhật Tôn, in personal command of the legal system with authority to hear litigation and pronounce judgment in a designated hall, set aside for this purpose. [134] In 1069, Nhật Tôn introduced the principle of a fixed salary for two judges and their ten assistants assigned to administer royal justice, "to encourage their honesty". [135] In making Phạm Cự Lạng the patron spirit of the royal gaol, Phật Mã appears to have been experimenting with reform in a way typical of his age, reminiscent of Đa Bảo's reformation of the Kiến-sơ monastery. It was more than thirty years before a more "bureaucratic" concept of reform was attempted. [136]

The remaining three spirits from the eleventh century for whom information from the *Sử ký* is cited in the *Việt điện u linh tập* were historical figures distinguished by their loyalty to Lý kings. Lê Phụng Hiểu, a warrior who had caught Lý Công Uân's eye with his exploits in a village boundary dispute as leader of a village self-defense force, scattered Phật Mã's rebellious brothers in the succession crisis of 1028. Lý Thường Kiệt captured the Cham king in 1069 and led the *Việts* against Sung China in 1075-1077. In contrast to these imposing military figures is Mục Thân, a common fisherman who had thwarted Lê Văn Thịnh's regicidal plot in 1096. [137] By distinguishing these men as powerful spirits worthy of being worshipped, later generations of Vietnamese were identifying their age as one in which loyalty to virtuous kings secured for them a high spiritual status. A statement attributed to Lê Phụng Hiểu in the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* is revealing. After the succession crisis of 1028, Phật Mã praised Phụng Hiểu's loyalty and bravery, saying that it surpassed all historical precedent. Phụng Hiểu reportedly replied:



The Crown Prince's [Lý Phật Mã's] virtue moves Heaven and earth. Those who dare to sprout strange schemes are punished with death by the gods and spirits of the realm, who earnestly labour to fulfill their duty. What strength do ministers and officials have?[138]

This statement is not simply a kind of polite modesty. It is a confident assertion that the labours of men are nought without the blessing of the spirits; it is also a clear affirmation that the blessing of the spirits rested upon Lý Phật Mã.

Lê Phụng Hiểu was not denying that he had gained merit through his loyal behaviour, but he was very clear about his not earning the merit; rather the merit was conferred by supernatural beings with power to punish and reward and it was the king whose virtue had provided an occasion for Phụng Hiểu to participate in this bestowal of merit. This reminds me of "Khmer 'Hinduism' in the seventh century" as interpreted by O.W. Wolters.[139]

### "Việt điện u linh tập"

I wish to look briefly at three more spirits from the **Việt điện u linh tập**, all associated with Lý Phật Mã. Lý Hoàng, called Lý Nhật Quang in the chronicles, was Phật Mã's eighth son. According to the **Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư**,[140] he was charged with building up the border defenses of Nghệ-an while Phật Mã attacked Champa in 1044. On his return from Champa, Phật Mã stopped in Nghệ-an to inspect his son's labours, and, being well pleased with what he saw, promoted Lý Hoàng to the rank of "king" and entrusted Nghệ-an to his care. Five thousand ruling-class Chams, captured in 1044, were settled in Nghệ-an under his direct supervision. According to the **Việt điện u linh tập**,[141] Lý Hoàng served with distinction for sixteen years, guarding the border and pacifying neighbouring mountain tribespeople. In 1056, however, his elder brother Nhật Tôn, who ascended the throne following Phật Mã's death in 1054, was jealous of his reputation and recalled him to Thăng-long. When he died, the people of Nghệ-an are said to have raised a posthumous cult in his honour.

Mị Ê was the wife of the Cham king killed in battle during the 1044 war. According to the **Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư**,[142] she was captured and brought to Vietnam, where she threw herself from Phật Mã's boat and drowned in a river to avoid being dishonoured. According to the **Việt điện u linh tập**,[143] on calm nights the local people heard the sound of sighing and weeping coming from the depths of the river, so they built a shrine to offer sacrifices to the departed spirit. Later, when Phật Mã came across the shrine during the course of his travels, he inquired about it, and, upon hearing the story of the shrine, he reportedly said: "If there is truly a spirit here, it should declare itself for me to know." That night in a dream a woman appeared and said: "I am Mị Ê, wife of the Cham king". When he awoke, Phật Mã established ceremonial sacrifices and conferred a posthumous title on Mị Ê's spirit. The local people worshipped her and many miracles were attributed to her power. The establishment of this cult was probably in some measure motivated by a desire to propitiate a violent death.

The cults of Lý Hoàng and Mị Ê have their origin in the moment of Phật Mã's greatest achievement, his expedition to Champa. Lý Hoàng

was a frontier guardian prince. Mị Ê was the wife of a fallen enemy. Both became objects of popular veneration. Lý Hoàng was honoured by the inhabitants of Nghệ-an and Mị Ê by people living beside the river where she drowned. The sentiment attributed to Phậ Mã that authentic spirits were those "declared for him to know" contains the idea that it was Phậ Mã's royal virtue that aroused the spirits to declare themselves. A further implication is that not all spirits recognized by the people were "declared" for Phậ Mã "to know", suggesting a royal bias in perceiving the spirit world.

By the turn of the fourteenth century, when the *Việt điện u linh tập* was compiled, these cults appear to have been perceived as an expression of Phậ Mã's power, which was also the power of the Lý court and the Việt realm to defend the frontiers and to conquer enemies. The wife of a fallen enemy becoming a guardian spirit of the realm reveals great confidence in the Việt identity and is an indication of the religious nature of this identity. Mị Ê's decision to die with honour in a Vietnamese river resulted in her being received into the world of Vietnamese spirits. Phậ Mã is portrayed as not only having understood this but also as having stimulated Mị Ê to "declare" herself as a Vietnamized spirit. Phậ Mã's virtue thus turned an enemy spirit into a native guardian spirit. The Vietnamese spirit world was able to receive and domesticate alien spirits, a clear demonstration of the vitality of "Lý dynasty religion".

Another spirit from the *Việt điện u linh tập* associated with Phậ Mã is the spirit of Long-độ, the "Dragon's Belly". The "Dragon's Belly" referred to the geographical, political, and spiritual center of the realm at Thăng-long. According to the *Việt điện u linh tập*, [144] the spirit of the Dragon's Belly appeared to Kao P'ien, the T'ang general who restored order in Vietnam after the Nan Chao depredations of the 860s, when he rebuilt the city of Đại-la, Thăng-long's predecessor, at the site of modern Hanoi. Kao P'ien tried in vain to exorcise the spirit and finally hastened back to China, according to the tale, in order to avoid the spirit's power. The people built a shrine for the spirit near what became the east gate of Thăng-long. In Phậ Mã's time, the area around the shrine had become a marketplace where foreign merchants gathered. One night a typhoon flattened all the buildings in the area except the shrine. Phậ Mã took this as a supernatural sign and honoured the spirit with sacrifices and a ceremonial title. The *Việt điện u linh tập* further claims that in the thirteenth century fire destroyed the city three times but each time the shrine survived without harm.

The spirit of the Dragon's Belly was seen as the most eminent spirit of the realm, for it was the guardian spirit of the place where the capital stood. A foreign general attempting to rule here was frightened off by the spirit, and in Phậ Mã's time the spirit revealed its power by withstanding a typhoon. The information about this shrine surviving three fires in Trần times shows that thirteenth-century Vietnamese continued to find new evidence of this spirit's power; they seemingly attributed the establishment of this spirit's cult to Phậ Mã.

The significance of Lý Phậ Mã honouring the spirit of the Dragon's Belly lies in the traditional perception of Thăng-long as, in the words of Lý Công Uẩn's proclamation upon moving the capital in 1010, "King Kao's old capital at Đại-la city". Kao P'ien was regarded by ruling-class Vietnamese as a great leader who rebuilt Đại-la and ushered in an

era of peace and prosperity. The city he built became the seat of later Vietnamese kings. But, according to the tale of the spirit of the Dragon's Belly, he could not withstand the supernatural powers of the land, being an alien from the north. The implication of this is that in order to rule from this place one must be in harmony with the spirit of the Dragon's Belly. The spirit was thus associated with the idea of kingship. Phật Mã's patronage of this spirit indicates that he was a man worthy of this spirit's favour. The power of Thăng-long built up by Phật Mã aroused the supernatural blessing of the spirit of the Dragon's Belly. The spirit "declared" itself to Phật Mã through the typhoon. The perception of Phật Mã revealed in the **Việt điện u linh tập** was of a king who not only ruled the temporal realm but who was also in a relationship of harmony and understanding with the supernatural realm.

One other spirit can be mentioned here in connection with Phật Mã, though the **Việt điện u linh tập** does not make an association. This is Hậu Tắc, Minister of Agriculture under the mythical Emperor Shun of the Chinese golden age in antiquity. Hậu Tắc (后稷) was revered by the Chinese as the "God of Agriculture" as early as the Chou dynasty. According to the **Việt điện u linh tập**, [145] Hậu Tắc "instructed the people to plant all varieties of grain" and an altar for sacrificing to Hậu Tắc was raised at the south gate of La-thành, the T'ang-era predecessor of Đại-la/Thăng-long. We can assume that Hậu Tắc's cult was established in Vietnam during the Chinese provincial period, probably during T'ang. According to the **Việt sử lược**, [146] Đinh Bộ Lĩnh raised an altar to Hậu Tắc (社稷) in 968, probably at Hoa-lư, and in 1048, Lý Phật Mã raised an altar to Hậu Tắc (社稷) at Thăng-long. We can surmise that Lý Phật Mã repaired or rebuilt the T'ang-era altar, and that the cult of Hậu Tắc, as it was known in Trần times, dated from 1048. This cult was based on a recognition that agriculture was the foundation of the throne's economic well-being. Phật Mã was famous for his interest in agriculture, epitomized by his insistence on personally conducting the spring plowing ceremony. [147] His patronage of Hậu Tắc may have contributed to this spirit being included among those honoured by the Trần court as having been efficacious against the Mongol-Yüan foe.

## Conclusion

We must get beyond the simplistic assumption that the Lý dynasty was a centralized bureaucratic state. I have not argued this point in detail because here I have taken a different topic. But I believe Sakurai's work and my own research will sustain this line of thought, indications about the direction of which I have given in this essay.

Rather than a dynastic bureaucracy administering all sections of the realm, I have argued that there was a dynasty in direct control of a core area surrounding the capital. Temporal leadership was exercised in maintaining frontier security and the tributary relationship with China. Religious leadership was exercised in nurturing a national focus for the different forms of belief then prevailing, from local animist cults to a reformist monastic Buddhism. This focus was more than animism, more than Buddhism, more than a royal cult; I have called it "Lý dynasty religion". I believe this "Lý dynasty religion" was a significant phase in the evolution of the Việt national identity. Powerful regional clans were loyal to the Lý not because Lý officials could enforce compliance

but because they **believed** in the Lý kings. They believed that the Lý kings were men of virtue, competent to deal with the supernatural powers of the land, able to obtain supernatural blessing for the prosperity of the realm. The Lý dynasty was established by general acclamation, not by a campaign of pacification. In the twelfth century, a series of royal minorities allowed power to fall into the hands of rival maternal clans at court. These clans were simply the regional powers who until then had been satisfied to sit in the shade of the Lý kings. But when there were no strong adult kings, they found themselves thrust into the center of the stage; as their rivalries increased in intensity, "Lý dynasty religion" faded into disbelief, receiving a new blow with every battle between warring regional powers in the violence that gained momentum at the turn of the thirteenth century.

To some, what I have described as "Lý dynasty religion" may seem to be not much different from Chinese theories about the nature of the authority and legitimacy of Chinese emperors. True, in theory there is a similarity in the assumption of the emperor's virtue and of this virtue as an indication of Heaven's favour through bestowal of the mandate to rule. But here the significant level of analysis is not theoretical. In historical times, these theories were expressed in rituals and justifying maxims at the Chinese court while actual state power depended upon bureaucratic control. In Lý Vietnam, religion had not yet been boiled down to a few rituals and justifying maxims; there, it was the substance of state power. The Lý kings were obeyed because they were **believed**. The Lý dynasty rose so spectacularly in the eleventh century because there was an unbroken series of **believable** kings; it faded and fell a few generations later because the Lý kings were no longer **believable** in terms of the pattern of thought embodied in "Lý dynasty religion". The Lý dynasty was essentially the growth and decay of a religious idea.

## NOTES

1. Lê Thành Khôi, *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et Civilisation* (Paris, 1955).
2. See the essays by Nguyễn Hồng Phong, Trần Quốc Vương, and Nguyễn Danh Phiệt in *Nghiên cứu lịch sử* 202 (Jan.-Feb. 1982).
3. Minoru Katakura, "Betonamu Richō keiho kō" (A study of the criminal law of the Lý dynasty in Vietnam), *Shigaku-Zasshi* LXXXII, II (Nov. 1973):43.
4. *Ibid.*, p.55.
5. Minoru Katakura, *Betonamu no rekishi to higashi Ajia* (Vietnamese history and East Asia) (Tokyo: Sugiyama shoten, 1977), p.64.
6. Yumio Sakurai, "Richō-ki Kōga deruta kaitaku shiron" (The Hồng River plain during the Lý dynasty), *Tōnan Ajia Kenkyū* 18, 2 (Sept. 1980), n.41.
7. *Ibid.* Other items in this series are: "Rakuden mondai no seiri" (A preliminary essay on the reclamation of the ancient Hồng River plain), *Tōnan Ajia Kenkyū* 17, 1 (June 1979):3-57; "Jusseki Kōga deruta kaitaku shiron" (The Hồng River plain in the tenth century), *Tōnan Ajia Kenkyū* 17, 4 (March 1980):597-632. Sakurai has also published several studies of landownership in Vietnam during the period from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries.
8. Sakurai, "Richō-ki", pp.297-98.
9. *Ibid.*, p.312.
10. *Ibid.*, pp.298-304.
11. *Ibid.*, p.274.
12. *Ibid.*, pp.274-75.
13. *Ibid.*, p.313.
14. O.W. Wolters, "Khmer 'Hinduism' in the Seventh Century", in *Early South East Asia*, eds R.B. Smith and W. Watson (New York and Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.427-42. O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), pp.5-15.
15. For more details about this and the following discussion of the tenth century, see K.W. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp.254-95.
16. I strongly suspect three; see K.W. Taylor, "The 'Twelve Lords' in Tenth-Century Vietnam", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 14, 1 (March 1983):58-61.
17. Taylor, *Birth*, pp.288-92.
18. Ngô Sĩ Liên (吳仕連), *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư (大越史記全書), Bản kỷ (本紀)* (Tōyō Bunko text, hereafter TT), 1:15b.

19. Masahiro Kawahara, "Richō to Sō tonō kankai" (Relations between the Lý dynasty and the Sung), in *Betonamu Chūgoku Kankaiishi* (History of international relations between Vietnam and China), ed. Yamamoto Tasuro (Tokyo, 1975), pp.64-68.<sup>1</sup>
20. See Ma Tuan-lin (馬端臨), *Wen hsien t'ung-k'ao* (文獻通考) (Hang-chou, 1896), 330:29b-31b.
21. Trần Văn Giáp, "Le Bouddhisme en Annam", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 32 (1932):216-17.
22. *Ibid.*, p.217, n.1 and p.218, n.1.
23. Taylor, *Birth*, p.353.
24. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.217, n.1.
25. Kenji Tomita, "Betonamu no minzoku zokujū 'Jinan' no kōzō to sono engen" (Chữ Nôm, the former Vietnamese demotic script - its structure and origin), *Tōnan Ajia Kenkyū* 17, 1 (June 1979):85-98.
26. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.217, n.1.
27. Fifty years ago, Trần Văn Giáp identified the text as "Bibl. EF., A,818" (*Ibid.*, p.201). I can find no evidence that this text is currently available outside Vietnam.
28. *Ibid.*, pp.246-47.
29. *Ibid.*, p.246.
30. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton, 1972), pp.313-20.
31. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.246.
32. The famous rustic monks Không Lộ and Giác Hải were claimed by both the Vô Ngôn Thông and the Thảo Đường "sects"; *ibid.*, pp.248, 250, 254.
33. The Định-sơ and Kiến-sơ "sects"; *ibid.*, pp.254, 255.
34. The Thiên-phúc, Vạn-tuế, and Lục-tổ temples were associated at different times with both the Vô Ngôn Thông and Vinitaruci "sects". The Phúc-thánh temple was associated at different times with both the Thảo Đường and Vô Ngôn Thông "sects". The Khai-quốc temple was associated at different times with all three "sects".
35. *Ibid.*, p.197.
36. TT, 2:4b, 8b, and 16b; establishing rules and regulations for the monks in 1010 and 1019 by Lý Công Uẩn and in 1028 by Lý Phật Mã. TT, 2:29a, and *Việt sử lược* (越南史略), in *Shou shan ko ts'ung shu* (守山劄記) (Taipei, 1968; hereafter VSL), 2:10b; the convening of "arhat assemblies" (La-hán hội 羅漢會) by Lý Phật Mã in 1040 and Lý Nhật Tôn in 1956.
37. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.253.
38. *Ibid.*, pp.254-55.
39. See note 34 above.
40. *Ibid.*, p.248.

41. Huỳnh Sanh Thông, ed. & tr., **The Heritage of Vietnamese Poetry** (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p.19.
42. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.250.
43. Ibid., pp.248, 250, 254. On Không Lộ and Giác Hải see also **Lĩnh-nam chích quái** (Saigon, 1961), pp.35-36 of Chinese text.
44. Ibid., p.255.
45. Ibid., p.238. TT, 1:18a-b.
46. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.238.
47. Ibid., p.240; perhaps by this expression Trần Văn Giáp is referring to the position of **tăng lục**.
48. Ibid., pp.238-39.
49. Ibid., p.242.
50. Ibid., p.239. TT, 3:16b-17a. On Đạo Hạnh see also **Lĩnh-nam chích quái**, pp.28-33 of Chinese text.
51. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", pp.240-41.
52. Ibid., p.241.
53. Ibid., p.241.
54. Ibid., p.243.
55. Ibid., pp.245-47. TT, 2:22a.
56. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", pp.246-47.
57. Ibid., pp.206-11.
58. Ibid., p.248.
59. Ibid., pp.249-50.
60. Ibid., p.251.
61. Vô Ngôn Thông himself had been noted for practising "wall meditation"; *ibid.*, p.244.
62. TT, 2:19a.
63. TT, 2:20b.
64. TT, 2:20b-21a.
65. See note 5 above.
66. TT, 2:11b.
67. TT, 2:27b.
68. TT, 2:31b-32a.
69. TT, 2:33a-b.

70. TT, 2:6a.
71. TT, 3:3-12a.
72. TT, 3:11b-12a.
73. TT, 1:3b.
74. TT, 1:18b.
75. Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kanwa Jiten* (Tokyo: Shukusha Ban, 1966-68), 3:404.
76. In Nara Japan (eighth century), **quốc sư** were assigned to be in charge of the priests and nuns in specific localities where they "lectured on sutras and prayed for the country". See *ibid.*, 3:80, as a reference for the items raised in this paragraph.
77. I am indebted to Ng Chin Keong for this observation.
78. TT, 1:19a.
79. Upon his death in 1015, Đào Cam Mộc was honoured as **thái sư á vương** (太子師王); TT, 2:7a.
80. TT, 2:16a.
81. TT, 2:2a.
82. TT, 2:7b-8a.
83. VSL, 2:10a.
84. Ý Lan later became famous for her devotion to the Buddhist religion and, as we have already noted, reportedly consulted **quốc sư** Thông Biện about the history of Buddhism in Vietnam in 1096; this might suggest a close relationship between Ý Lan and the monkhood.
85. TT, 3:5a.
86. TT, 3:6b, and VSL, 2:15a-b.
87. TT, 3:7b.
88. Morohashi, *Dai Kanwa Jiten*, 3:134.
89. TT, 3:8a.
90. TT, 3:10a.
91. TT, 3:10a.
92. TT, 3:10a.
93. Trịnh Cao Tường and Đặng Kim Ngọc, "Về hai ngôi mộ thời Lý đã được khai quật" (About two Lý period tombs that have been excavated), *Khảo cổ học* (Hanoi) 2 (30), June 1979, pp.45-50.
94. VSL, 2:16b.
95. TT, 3:11a.
96. See the reference in note 19 above.



97. TT, 3:11b.
98. TT, 3:11b.
99. TT, 3:12a.
100. TT, 3:12a.
101. TT, 3:12b.
102. TT, 3:12b-13a; VSL, 2:18b.
103. Trịnh Cao Tường and Đặng Kim Ngọc, "Về hai ngôi mộ", p.47.
104. I use the Tōyō Bunko X.39 text of the *Việt điện u linh tập* (hereafter VDULT), which I believe to be the most authentic of available texts.
105. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", pp.218-19.
106. VDULT, 2a.
107. VDULT, 7a.
108. VDULT, 7a.
109. VDULT, 7a-b.
110. VDULT, 7b.
111. Trần Văn Giáp, "Bouddhisme", p.244.
112. VDULT, 14a.
113. VDULT, 14a.
114. VDULT, 14a-b.
115. VDULT, 14b.
116. See note 36 above.
117. VDULT, 14b.
118. VDULT, 14b.
119. VDULT, 13a-b.
120. In the twelfth century, this spirit appeared as a "rain maiden" to King Lý Thiên Tộ (reigned 1129-1176), VDULT, 14b, as also did the more well-known spirits of the Trưng sisters, VDULT, 4b-5a.
121. Morohashi, *Dai Kanwa Jiten*, 2:837 and 10:536.
122. Gustave Dumoutier, *Le Grand Bouddha de Hanoi* (Hanoi, 1888).
123. TT, 1:32a.
124. TT, 2:32a-b.
125. TT, 2:34b, 35b.
126. TT, 2:36a.

127. TT, 2:4b.
128. TT, 2:5a-b.
129. TT, 2:7b-8a.
130. TT, 2:8a.
131. VDULT, 9a-b.
132. TT, 3:9b.
133. TT, 2:25a-b.
134. TT, 2:28b-29a.
135. TT, 3:4a-b.
136. The penal code drafted in 1042 by the "secretariat" (**trung thư** 中書 ; see TT, 30b-31a) seems to take its significance more from the activist personality of Phật Mã and preparations for military mobilization than from any long-term policy for administering justice. I doubt if there was such a thing as a dynastic penal code applied beyond the core area directly ruled by the Lý clan.
137. VDULT, 6b-7a, 8a-b, 8b-9a.
138. TT, 2:12b.
139. See note 14 above.
140. TT, 2:35a.
141. VDULT, 6a.
142. TT, 2:35a.
143. VDULT, 5a-b.
144. VDULT, 22b-23a.
145. VDULT, 4a-b.
146. VSL, 1:17a and 2:8b.
147. TT, 2:25b.

## 8

# From Myth to History: Imagined Polities in 14th Century Vietnam

E.S. Ungar

The points whereby a social group plots its beginnings in time and the ways the group defines its ancient space, be they spiritual, cultural, or territorial, yield insights into their perceptions of political authority. When shifts occur in the cultural constellation, they may signal alterations in the perceptions and nature of group authority. Such modifications to the cultural firmament occurred with distinctive frequency in Vietnam of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Histories and folklore of that time reveal numerous attempts to pinpoint Vietnamese origins. During the fourteenth century Vietnamese stories and histories increasingly depicted these origins in terms of a "polity", one which grew ever more ancient and larger in area as the century progressed. The texts recording these various origin stories, the successive versions that appeared, and what they signify are the subject of this paper.

Six sources that provide the earliest datable accounts and span the years 1272 to 1400, each present a different version of Vietnamese origins. These works fall into two genres: official or semi-official histories, and "wild" tales (*đã sử*) or unofficial histories. The first genre comprises works written on a Sinic model which organized history chronologically, giving year-by-year entries according to the dynastic calendar. The term "official" indicates a work was commissioned or sanctioned by the government. "Semi-official" works were written in the "official" style by Confucian-trained literati who wrote privately, however, but adhered to the same strictures. Both forms demanded that authors weed out "unorthodox" non-Confucian elements such as miraculous tales, spiritual wonders, etc. in favor of accounts written for moral edification. "Wild" histories, on the other hand, were compilations of folk tales, supernatural wonders, and similar stories. The Vietnamese "wild" histories mentioned below tell of sacred places, powerful guiding spirits, guarding heroes, and the origins of customs. Prefaces of these "unofficial" books inform us that their compilers were also literati, often retired officials living in country villages, who set down stories drawn from older oral traditions or from previous compilations like their own. The chronological table of sources that follows lists these texts in the order of their appearance.

The different versions of origins found in these six works may be

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF SOURCES

Work	Genre	Date	Title	Author	Phase
1	official	1272	<b>Đại Việt sử ký</b> [a] (Historical Record of Great Viet)	Lê Văn Hưu	I
2	unofficial	1329	<b>Việt Điện u linh tập</b> (Potent Spirits of the Viet domain)	Lý Tế Xuyên	
3	semi- official	1333	<b>An Nam chí lược</b> (Brief Record of An Nam)	Lê Tắc	II
4	semi- official	circa 1340-1377	<b>Việt sử lược</b> (Brief History of Viet)	?	
5	unofficial	late 14th cent.	<b>Việt Nam thế chí</b> (Memoir of the Generations of Viet Nam)	Hồ Tôn Thốc	III
6	unofficial	circa 1370-1400	<b>Lĩnh Nam chích quái</b> (Wondrous Tales of Linh Nam)	Trần Thế Pháp	
7	semi- official	1435	<b>Dư địa chí</b> (Geography)	Nguyễn Trãi	
8	official	1479	<b>Đại Việt sử ký ngoại ký toàn thư</b> (Complete Historical Annals of Great Viet - Outer Records)	Ngô Sĩ Liên	

## Vietnamese dynasties

Lý dynasty	1008-1225
Trần dynasty	1226-1399
Hồ (de facto)	1389-1400
Hồ dynasty	1400-1407
Ming occupation	1407-1427
Lê dynasty (early period)	1428-1527

[a] No longer extant as a separate work but incorporated into Work Eight whose compiler records that Lê Văn Hưu began the first Vietnamese official history with the record of Triệu Vũ Đế (Ch'ao T'o) in 207 BC.

grouped into three phases according to their content. If one were to plot these phases as charts of the Vietnamese past, using the coordinates of time and space to pinpoint origins, one might represent them as follows. In the earliest references one envisions a spiritual map of sacred places: nodes of potent configurations of mountains and waters, connected by subterranean "veins" (*mạch*) through which geomantic energy flowed. To the extent that human forms intrude on the spiritual landscape they appear in the guise of unnamed heroic figures. On their deaths the spirits of these heroes inhabit ancient sacred places or consecrate new natural locations. In the "wild" account discussed first, time is not specified; in the earliest historical account the beginning of the Vietnamese polity is dated to the relatively recent past.

The second phase reveals a dawning awareness of cultural boundaries. With these distinctions the scope of the physical map enlarges at the expense of the spiritual one: a sense of the polity emerges and is dated back to a much earlier time. This new awareness is represented by a cultural demarcation, with the report of the earliest tribute mission to China by a Vietnamese group known as the *Việt Thường*. This division is further demonstrated by the image of an emerging polity, a specified kingdom ruled by kings of the same name through a fixed number of generations.

In the third phase Vietnamese origins are conveyed through the image of a succession of polities, connected by an imposing genealogy and extending back to remotest prehistorical times. This genealogical record authorizes Vietnamese claims to a broader cultural heritage than before, and for the first time specifically associates this authority with a well-defined set of borders.

To trace the successive emergence of these three phases, we may now turn to the histories themselves. As point of departure, we begin with the earliest dynastic history, the *Đại Việt sử ký* which was presented to the Trần court in 1272. It began Vietnamese history with the founding of the Triệu dynasty in 207 BC and concluded with the Lý dynasty (1008-1225), the first Vietnamese dynasty to win enduring independence from China. As the contributions of Whitmore and Taylor in this volume point out, the Lý dynasty was plagued by weakness in dynastic succession, a problem remedied by the succeeding Trần. Bearing in mind the weaknesses of the Lý, the Trần-sponsored official history emphasized the twin themes of dynastic succession and independence.[1] The dynastic history made little discernable reference, however, to territorial boundaries for the polity. Borders were mentioned primarily in the context of incursions and wars, notably with China and Champa.

The second text to appear, the pseudo-historical account, "Potent Spirits that Govern the Việt Domain" (*Việt điện u linh*, 1329), is the earliest extant example of Vietnamese unofficial history.[2] While the earliest historically-based account in this collection dates back to the second century AD, the second work's tales devoted to sacred places refer to far more ancient origins. The story of the spirit of the country's most sacred mountain, *Tản Viên*, occasions a reference to a legendary Vietnamese king. The story explains the origin of the natural disasters that often attended the monsoon climate. The tale is told in terms of a struggle between the Mountain and Water Spirits. Discord arose over their competition for a human prize, the Heroic

King's daughter, whom both sought in marriage. The Mountain Spirit won the father's approval and took his bride to live in the mountains. This caused the wrath of the Water Spirit to wash over the people from time to time. Despite the brief intrusion of a political element in the guise of Heroic King (Hùng Vương), the story is dominated by the power of spirits.

This story concludes the accounts of the first phase. Both have in common the era of the Chinese Han dynasty as an historically-datable starting point. The unofficial history, nevertheless, provides a mythical dimension in depicting the ancient spirits of the realm and associating them with the otherwise unidentified "Heroic King".

The works of the second phase permit a comparison between two "semi-official" versions of the earliest past. Although both books were written by Vietnamese authors, the first author (Lê Tác) was a political exile in China, and his comments on his own country were constrained accordingly. His "Summary Account of An Nam" (*An Nam chí lược*) of 1333 is the first to introduce the notion of ancient boundaries with reference to China. He states in his introduction that in olden times "An Nam"[3] was the southernmost area **within** the Chinese orbit. He then offers an earlier dating than the first-phase works for the historical emergence of a Vietnamese polity. He does so by announcing the arrival of the earliest tribute mission to China by a Vietnamese group, the Việt Thường. According to the author of Work Three, an emissary of the Việt Thường people arrived at the court of Chou Ch'eng Wang circa 1115 BC. While the author includes the Việt Thường area within the place of Chinese influence, he establishes a political divide. This in itself implies the existence of a separate Vietnamese polity, symbolized in the act of traversing a boundary to enter the realm of the Chou empire.

The next work in Phase Two, the "Brief History of Viet" (*Việt sử lược*, circa 1340-1477) is the first to establish a definite Vietnamese border with China. The author of this fourth work flatly contradicts the third author's contention that the ancient Việt Thường area belonged to the Chinese domain. On the contrary, Author Four asserts that the ancient Vietnamese area which the Chinese called Chiao Chih (Giao Chỉ) was "far beyond [the orbit] of the Hundred Yueh peoples". Moreover, it "was not subject to the control of the Yellow Emperor".[4] He thereby draws a clear cultural boundary marking off the northernmost area of ancient Vietnamese settlement.

The author of Work Four elaborates his picture of an ancient polity further than the preceding works both in terms of administration and antiquity. He names fifteen administrative divisions of the ancient territory and states categorically that none of them were encompassed in the earliest Chinese geography, the Tribute of Yü (Yü, circa 2705 BC). With this statement the "Brief History of Việt" implicitly pre-dates the existence of an area of Vietnamese settlement by a millennium more than the preceding "Summary Account of An Nam".

The author then proceeds to sharpen the distinction between ancient Vietnam and her northern neighbour. In words that carry a tone of defiance and alienation, he writes that

the Spring and Autumn period [eighth to fifth centuries BC] referred to (our area) as Ch'üeh Ti, 'Empty Land', and their annals described (us) as Tiao T'ü, 'Tattooed Foreheads'. [5]

Only after making the cultural divide absolutely clear does the

author repeat the episode, first mentioned in Work Three, of the Việt Thường tribute to the Chou court. The fourth history continues with the founding of the first Vietnamese kingdom. In this version the mythic Heroic King of Work Two appears once more, clothed now in the robes of a dynastic founder. His kingdom is dated and named: in the reign of Chou Chuang Wang (696-82 BC), an extraordinary man arose who was able to unite the different regions by his magic arts and he called himself Hùng Vương, Heroic King; his kingdom, Văn Lang, was ruled by his descendants for eighteen generations. The author again introduces a new element by using a count of generations to mark the passage of dynastic time. From this point on his account becomes vague until the arrival of Triệu Đà which brings the narrative down to 207 BC, the starting point of the first dynastic history, discussed above.

We have seen that the works of the first phase avoided mentioning boundaries in any political sense. The ancient past, to the extent that it was given substance, took the form of an undefinable realm of sacred places. The works of the second phase are the first to manifest the notion of a boundary to the body politic, in this case a border defined in terms of non-Chinese versus Chinese groups. While the two authors were divided over whether to include the Vietnamese within or exclude them from the Chinese world, one fact remains. This border itself was imposed on the Vietnamese authors by Chinese cultural criteria.

The works of the third phase reveal the greatest elaboration of the ancient image of a polity. The two authors of this phase devote the greatest attention to the problem of ancient genealogies. Phase Three marks a dynasticization of origin myths, traced back to remotest antiquity. Myths of the ancient polity are "socialized" to a greater degree than before, and the passage of time is marked not by reference to Chinese rulers but by historicized figures who succeed one another in unbroken generational links. The concept of genealogy introduces the issue of inheritance. Dynastic genealogy leads to claims over territory, and the idea of a Vietnamese polity with specified borders is born with dramatic results.

The texts concerned are the "Record of Generations of Southern Viet" (**Việt Nam thế chí**) and the collection of "Wondrous Tales of Lĩnh Nam" (**Lĩnh Nam chích quái**). The preface of the "Record of Generations" is extant together with a description of the work given in traditional catalogues of dynastic literature. Although the author had been a literati-official of the Trần and had written historical works respected by the Vietnamese Confucian literati, this work was deemed disreputable by Confucian scholars of his own time. The author states in his preface that he was criticized for his insistence on following old tales of miraculous content instead of giving ethical instruction to reform the public mores. The "Record of Generations" consisted of two chapters: the first on the eighteen generations of the Hồng Bàng[6] and the second on the Triệu dynasty. His work was described as: distinguishing clearly historical details "but most of his writing was miraculous tales, although these also filled in lacunae of early history".[7]

The notion of an ancient line of descent from mythical leaders and ancient heroes seemed to grip the imagination of the final two fourteenth-century writers. In the "Wondrous Tales of Lĩnh Nam" (Work Six) the story of Vietnamese origins extended this genealogy back in time to include the most ancient culture heroes of the East Asian world. The author's account of ancient origins completely subsumes the mythic

content in the story of the rivalry between the Mountain and Water Spirits of Work Two. This legend and the story of the Hundred Eggs from which hatched the "hundred" ancestors of all the Việt peoples were now dynasticized under the most elaborate account of the Heroic Kings to appear in works of this kind. The story of the Heroic Kings heads the series of tales and becomes the keystone to a new cultural definition of the Vietnamese polity.

The author of Work Six extends the genealogy of the Heroic King as far back as the ancient Chinese God of Agriculture (circa 2879 BC), the founding ancestor of the Chinese people. Spinning a common historical thread through the Vietnamese and Chinese pasts, the author weaves various Vietnamese origin stories into a succession of lineage genealogies. These represent a series of Vietnamese "dynasties" descended from a common ancestor with China. According to the version in Work Six, the God of Agriculture's descendants included two brothers, the elder of whom became the Chinese ruler and the younger, called Kinh Dương Vương, the earliest Vietnamese ruler; Kinh Dương Vương pre-dated Hùng Vương and the Văn Lang kingdom. His kingdom was called Xích Quỷ, the earliest recorded Vietnamese polity. The earliest king's descendants were the "Hundred Sons", the founders of the Hundred Yüeh[8] tribes. The first among these hundred sons was Hùng Vương, Heroic King, now possessed of a hallowed lineage.

The version of Hùng history given in Work Six appropriated to the Vietnamese kingdom of Văn Lang the entire territory of historical Hundred Yüeh settlement. This version now demarcated the ancient polity in territorial terms: the Hùng domain extended from the south China sea on the east to Thục (Yunnan) on the west; on the north from Lake T'ung T'ing (Đông Định, just south of the Yangtze River) to Champa in the south. Thus, the legendary forebears of the Vietnamese were traced back to the third millennium BC, and the borders of the ancient polity of Văn Lang extended over an area comprising much of present-day China south of the Yangtze. The northern boundary of the polity in ancient times was thereby shifted thousands of miles north.

This position stands in stark contrast to that of Work Four. Gone is the latter's tone of defiance and alienation that distinguished the account of the "Empty Land". Gone, too, is the cultural cordon cutting the Vietnamese off from the Hundred Yüeh peoples. This mistrust may have stemmed from the author's concern to avoid potential historical justification for future Chinese involvement in the affairs of his country. After all, northern incursions had occurred only a century before with the unsuccessful Mongol invasions of Đại Việt in the 1200s.

Where Work Four's authors rejected any claim of ancient Vietnamese ties with areas under Chinese sway, the late fourteenth-century Vietnamese writer was apparently unashamed in recognizing cultural kinship with the other historical Yüeh tribes of southern China, even though these tribes had also been castigated by the Chinese for their "barbarian" customs. With a new tone of self-assurance the sixth work imposes on the ancient past a border defined now by Vietnamese criteria. In partitioning the Chinese past along Vietnamese cultural frontiers, Work Six places the ancient Hùng rulers at the forefront of the Hundred Yüeh peoples.

We have just seen how these six works progressively cast the origins of the Vietnamese people in the forms of a polity. In the first-phase works, the historical dating for the beginning of the polity



is foreshortened compared to the datings given in succeeding works, while the image of origins is set in a timeless, eternal world of "mountains and waters" (*non nước*). This is the abode of spirits of nature and immortals who were the spirits of heroic leaders. The spirits of heroes are assumed to enter the natural realm via the geomantic energy of their burial sites. In the second phase, historical time intrudes on the image of the earliest past as the elements of dynastic succession and the designation of a cultural perimeter appear. In the third phase, lineage concerns become salient as Vietnamese origins are telescoped into a chain of successive generations, and the world of political concerns obtrudes onto the previous versions of the past. In this phase the notion of lineage as a bearer of political authority introduces the social elements of families and relationships to the past and future. Meanwhile the idea of inheritance or patrimony as an expression of political control, what Wolters aptly terms "a dynastic trust", entails attention to property and a tendency to describe cultural identity in terms of territorial extent.

Now that these three phases have been described in some detail, it is appropriate to consider to what extent these images of the polity reflect alterations in the perception and nature of political authority. Whereas Work One is preoccupied with the weaknesses of the Lý dynasty in terms of its dynastic succession policies, Work Two's account depicts a spirit world where human elements scarcely enter. It seems to reflect a vision of the past more akin to the inchoate political shape of the Lý dynasty than to the more tightly-structured dynastic formation of the Trần. Taylor's study of "Lý dynastic religion" which emphasizes the influence of the spirit world in so many aspects of state life, and Whitmore's study showing the fragmentary nature of political authority, both bear on the imagery associated with the story given in Work Two.

Both works in Phase Two manifest a greater preoccupation with political details and historical dating in establishing a Vietnamese self-definition with respect to China. Work Four, nevertheless, moves beyond reports of a tribute embassy, to build the picture of a "polity", in the sense of a state-like form, imposed on the earlier past. In this account a politically undifferentiated period exists, however, between the era of the "Tribute of Yü" and the founding of the kingdom of Văn Lang by the first Heroic King.

A most striking aspect of Work Four, besides the author's treatment of Hùng Vương (Heroic King) as a dynastic entity, is his unsettling cultural self-image, the bitter reference to Chinese characterization of his ancestors as "tattooed foreheads" in an "empty land". The complexity of his attitude requires us to bear two considerations in mind. First, Trần royal authority[9] was stronger than that of the Lý. This may well have influenced his structuring of the ancient history of the polity in terms of a dynasty. After all, his account of Vietnamese origins was the preface to his history of the reigns of the Lý and Trần kings. Second, Work Four was composed during the era of greatest internal Vietnamese political instability since the independence of the country three centuries earlier. From 1344, the kingdom was afflicted with peasant rebellions and recurring natural disasters. The cultural ambivalence of the author recalls Wolters' description of Phạm Sư Mạnh's poems of the same period. The poet, patrolling the northern borders, took comfort from his sense of

the ancient Vietnamese past and the security of being within Vietnamese boundaries, while regarding the area outside the northern border as inhospitable, a "miasmatic" place.

The works of Phase Three near the end of the century express greater confidence and optimism. The history of the ancient past is now long and orderly in political terms. The expansive vision of Work Six, in contrast to Work Four, gathers all the Yüeh peoples under the mantle of a primordial Vietnamese ancestor and makes the Vietnamese a political partner on equal footing with the ancient Chinese people.

The renewal of cultural confidence shown in the story in Work Six may have been stimulated by the gradual amelioration of conditions in the late fourteenth century with the arrival of a strong political alternative to the recently discredited Trần rule. From the late 1370s on, a rising dynastic star, Hồ Quý Ly, gained ever greater influence at the Trần court. By 1389 he was firmly in control of the government and a decade later proclaimed a new dynasty. During this era the kingdom began to regain its stability. In terms of cultural policy, despite a Confucian education, Hồ Quý Ly advocated gradual abolition of Chinese characters as the official writing system. Instead he introduced the use of *nôm* Vietnamese vernacular writing at court and encouraged its use in the translation of Chinese classical works. These actions may have been a further spur to the more elaborate compilation of folk traditions that appeared at this time.

Early in the next century, the Hồ dynasty fell victim to the might of invading armies sent south by the Ming Yung-lo emperor. From 1407 to 1427 numerous Vietnamese rebel groups arose to challenge the occupation. By 1427 the decade-long resistance movement led by Lê Lợi ousted the Ming and restored independence under the banner of the new Lê dynasty. In the era that followed, the sixth and most elaborate image of Vietnamese origins continued to be invoked. This image of the Vietnamese polity came to be legitimized in well-known texts of the fifteenth century, first appearing in Nguyễn Trãi's geography of 1435[10] and, most significantly, in the "outer" section of the official history of Great Việt, published by the Lê court in 1479. Thus, stories which had earlier been described as oral traditions, or criticized as "miraculous" tales, were incorporated into the official dynastic history a century later.

The images of political authority that filtered with increasing clarity into compilations of folk tales and official histories illustrate the growing perception of the ancient past in terms of dynastic authority. The issues of ancient boundaries, cultural kinship with the Hundred Yüeh peoples, and the earliest dating of Vietnamese settlement have become more than matters of documentary interest or cultural identity. Since the late twentieth century archaeological findings have raised scientific speculation over the dating and extent of ancient Vietnamese settlement. By 1979, new evidence had pushed the earliest dating of an historic Vietnamese polity back to the seventh century BC. Such discoveries begin to substantiate recorded folk traditions of a Vietnamese polity. Yet they still leave unsolved puzzles that intrigue historians and anthropologists concerning the selective nature of records of folk traditions: why, for instance, the traditional story of the Hundred Eggs, common to other Indochinese peoples, hatches its historical brood in late fourteenth century Đại Việt and not before.

## NOTES

1. O.W. Wolters, "Historians and Emperors in Vietnam and China: Comments arising out of Lê Văn Hưu's History, presented to the Trần court in 1272", 69-89.
2. See Trần Quốc Vượng's essay in this volume for references to indigenous, non-Sinic elements in Works Two, Five and Six of the chronological table.
3. An Nan ("Pacified South"): a pejorative Chinese name for the Vietnamese kingdom which was called Đại Việt (Great Việt) by its own people in this era.
4. Việt sử lược, 1:1.
5. Việt sử lược, 1:1.
6. A variant name of Hùng Vương.
7. Lịch triều hiến chương-văn tịch chí, 4:118; 45:147a.
8. "Yüeh" is the Mandarin Chinese pronunciation of the ideograph read as "Việt" in Vietnamese.
9. See O.W. Wolters' essay in this volume.
10. Nguyễn Trãi, Dư địa chí, 2:6.725 and G.1a; E.S. Ungar, "Vietnamese Ideology of State and Practice of Foreign Relations in the Fifteenth Century" (forthcoming).

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## Shipshape Societies: Boat Symbolism and Political Systems in Insular Southeast Asia\*

Pierre-Yves Manguin

Boat motives appearing in various Southeast Asian cultural contexts were first described in detail when the subject attracted the attention of scholars in the 1930's. On the one hand, Steinmann analysed the motive in terms of the "cult ship": starting from the description of the Lampung ship-cloths, he compared their motives with those appearing in shamanistic death rituals among the Dayaks and with the famous Bronze Age canoes of the Đông-sơn drums. On the other hand, Vroklage concentrated on Eastern Indonesia; except for the occasional comparison of the "death-ship" motive with the Greeks' crossing of the river Styx, for a brief outline analysis of the relationship of boat motives with the then popular "megalithic culture", or for the repeated mention of the ancient migratory voyage as the origin of the social patterns under discussion, his various articles are basically descriptive.[1]

Scattered references to the subject appeared occasionally after the War, but it is only during this last decade that the two previous trends have clearly been revived. Art historians, particularly specialists of textiles, have devoted a fair amount of work to the Lampung ship-cloths and to their role in this Sumatran society.[2] The Eastern Indonesian "field of studies" has similarly been the object of renewed interest from a large number of well-trained anthropologists who have used sophisticated analytical tools to study boat symbolism and its meaning within the global social systems they dealt with.[3]

However, to this point, little has been done to integrate in a broader geographical and chronological framework the multiple references to boat symbolism in Insular Southeast Asia. This paper will be an attempt at that, but it will concentrate on one single level of the symbolic discourse, which is that, as we shall see, of the boat as a metaphor for the ordered social group (leaving aside, among others, the higher encompassing macrocosmic order). The relationship of symbolic statements about boats and overseas sailing with exchange systems, the founding of political systems and the legitimisation of political power I will also leave aside in this paper.

The retrieval from various categories of historical and anthropological sources of statements pertaining to this specific level of symbolism will shed some light on the development of political systems of the whole of Insular Southeast Asia. I will try to answer

the questions posed with, as far as possible, an historian's feeling. Historians, or for that matter specialists of maritime history, have not as yet had their say on this subject.[4]

During the last few decades, let us say to simplify after Van Leur's work, trading patterns in Insular Southeast Asia have been taken into account in the historical process. However, the manner in which the continuous maritime exchanges that have taken place from the dawn of history (within the area as well as with the outside world) are related to local perceptions of the environment and the construction of social systems has not as yet been properly assessed. Some of the more obvious features of trade-oriented societies, best described in Insular Southeast Asia after the 15th century, are now often referred to by French historians as part of a "mentalité de réseau" (a trade-network system of values). However, as one tries to move back in time, classical sources get scarcer and far more difficult to interpret. Historians are thus compelled to make use of both chronological and spatial depth so as to attain an artificial "longue durée", as they simultaneously move along time and distance coordinates. One line of interpretation would say that in doing so they take advantage of the fact that various factors have led to a situation in which chosen cultural features of early Southeast Asian societies may have "survived" in some areas rather than in others: this is tantamount to stating that in most cases, as one moves east from an arbitrary centre somewhere in the Straits area, societies tend to have developed at a different pace, thus exhibiting features now vanished in western areas of the Archipelago. But anthropologists would now rather dispense with concepts like "survivals" and "cultural lag" and would take into account the fact that cultural traits such as the symbol systems we are dealing with are constantly being set aside, developed or reconstructed.[5] This is not the place to discuss these theoretical considerations. However, examples provided in the present paper tend to confirm the latter view: the sets of symbols under study do seem to have been adapted, expanded or altogether abandoned at various places and times throughout Insular Southeast Asia.

Dealing (or should one say juggling?) with such a complex and ever-changing scene, across thousands of years and kilometers, should necessarily be done with the utmost caution, and this may not be the major quality of this paper. I shall nevertheless take the risk.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1589, when Juan de Plasencia OFS described the social organisation of the Tagalogs in pre-Spanish times, this is what he wrote:

These chiefs (the **datu**) ruled over but few people; sometimes as many as a hundred houses, sometimes even less than thirty. This tribal gathering is called in Tagalo a **barangay**. It was inferred that the reason for giving themselves this name arose from the fact (...) that when they came to this land, the head of the **barangay**, which is a boat thus called, (...) became a **datu**. And so, even at the present day, it is ascertained that this **barangay** in its origin was a family of parents and children, relations and slaves.[6]

This seems to be the first recorded explanation for the similarity between the name of a boat and that of a small social unit. It soon became common reading among the Spanish clerics; when Spanish sources were later analysed by historians, the same exegesis was popularised and it remains today as the official theory, providing a ready-made interpretation of the origins of Philippines' political systems.[7]

The Tagalog and Cebuano **baranggay/balangay**, together with words closely akin in various other languages, do indeed have the meaning of "boat" and "boatload" as well as that of a small socio-political group, for which the Tagalog term **baryo** (from the Spanish **barrio**, a city quarter) is now a synonym.[8] But the kind of first-degree interpretation provided by Plasencia, whether devised by himself or provided him by contemporary Philippine informers, should be closely analysed in a broader context before it is accepted at face value.

At the present stage, the first remark that comes to the mind is that **baranggay**-type terms meaning both boat and social groups of variable orders are a common feature of Austronesian languages and societies, whether within the same language or not. Boats and houses, both the container and the contained (the "boatload" and the "household"), are the fundamental social units and it is no surprise to see that terms such as **kabang/bangka** and their cognates may mean "boat" in some languages and "house" in others.[9] Similarly, **banwa** and cognate terms can be found in many Austronesian languages with the meanings of a house (Palawan, Toraja), a larger social group (Javanese, Balinese, Bugis, Malay) or a boat (Javanese [?], Ngaju).[10]

But there is much more to it than simple semantic relationships. The latter aspect is only one out of the multiple components forming a vast set of cultural values. It is only by examining this whole set that a more reliable explanation for the **baranggay**-type paradigms will be found. Various communities of Insular Southeast Asia actually produce statements establishing complex homothetic correlations between boats, houses and/or larger social groups. A Bugis text on shipbuilding thus states clearly that "if you go to build a prau, it is just the same as if you go to build a house".[11] Houses and boats may even be at times opposed as in a Palawan myth which tells us about mobile houses and immobile canoes, an order which a young hare-brained girl decides to invert.[12] The Torajas' phrase **sanglembang**, applying to a household, is understood as "living together in a boat" (the word **lembang** means both a boat and a former **adat**-territory, now a modern district). In Sumba, during healing rituals, the master of the house is said to be "the master of the boat".[13] At a different level of perception, one may also quote Marcos de Lisboa's early 17th century **Vocabulario de la Lengua Bicol**, in which the word **laygay** is glossed as "to order or govern aboard a ship (...); it also means to govern one's house[hold], telling one's slaves what they ought to do".[14] The Bajau sea-nomads' social organisation is similarly quite revealing: he extended social group above the basic nuclear family (dwelling in a single house-boat) is that of family alliance, the name of which means "a group of boats travelling or mooring together". And, not so surprisingly, its leader is called **nakura** a clear borrowing from the Malay **nakhoda** (ultimately from Persian, and meaning "shipmaster").[15]

One may further pursue this theme by examining the very consistent references to ships that appear as metaphors for various levels of social organisation in Eastern Indonesia.[16] In most of the latter societies, where people are organised into small political systems, the boat and the house are the principal structural units. They are felt as the best modes available to define and regulate relations among members of the smaller units, between the latter and higher social groups (the village community sphere, or a small political system), and between all these social units and the material world (thus the economic production). They provide models for encompassing various orders of social, political, economic (and cosmological) classifications, together with their expression in myths and rituals. Examples taken in Sawu, Kei or Tanimbar will provide concrete evidence of the ubiquitous references to it. The houses are always perceived in clear correlation with the boat, with parts of them named after the "keel", the "mast", the "sails" or the "rudder".[17] The inhabitants of the same village look upon themselves as being a group of people who belong to the same "villageboat". This is the large communal boat which is jointly possessed by the whole community and is used only on special occasions, when the social order needs to be signified and revalidated (marriages, alliance renewals with other communities, warfare, death, etc.). The leader of the community and all the dignitaries have their appointed seats in their "village-boat"; these places are duplicated in the boat-shaped meeting place of the village, complete with stem and stern. Ritual dances are performed in boat order and the songs explicitly describe the boat thus mapped on the ground. The village itself, as well as the whole island at times, are spatially organised as a boat and its crew. The dead are disposed of in boat-burials. Myths refer to early voyages from overseas: the village spatial classification, as that of the communal boat, are said to be a reflexion of the original journey.

If one leaps to the western half of the Archipelago, the South Sumatran Lampung immediately come to the mind. Lampung textiles, and particularly the famous "ship-cloths" or "tissus à jonques", have recently been the object of renewed interest, in the wake of burgeoning researches on Indonesian textiles.[18] From narrow interpretations such as that of Steinmann ("the 'junks' are ships of the dead, carrying the souls of the deceased to the other world"), scholars have progressively widened their scope so as to re-place boat-symbolism, and specifically that of ship-cloths, within the context of a total society and its "ancient Indonesian coastal culture" (Holmgren & Spertus). The Lampung ship-cloths were indeed only one part of a vast set of highly symbolic artefacts and representations appearing at every stage of Lampung social life where **rites de passage** were involved (not to speak of the founding myth that recalls the story of "shipmaster Dampu Awang").[19] Most of the artefacts representing ships would actually also have depicted birds (particularly hornbills, as expected), buffaloes, snakes, banners, trees of life, the sun and the moon, etc. Considering the fact that the spectrum of signifieds of each one of these symbolic representations may well have been more than univocal, one is no doubt confronted with exceedingly complex statements of a cosmological order.

In this forest of symbols, I will retain one single, albeit essential, statement: that of the boat as a metaphor for an organised



social unit. This particular statement is found behind the varied depictions of boats in every one of the **rites de passage**. Ship-cloths - weavings as well as beadworks or mats - were hung on walls or were used to sit on, in rituals linked to birth, circumcision, marriage, leaders' **adat**-meetings, changing of social rank and death. Ship-cloths themselves belonged to different categories: the usage of the largest and most beautiful cloths, some of them 5m long (the **palepai**), a privilege of the highest social ranks, and actually seem to have been reserved to the eldest son or the eldest representative of the lineage descending from the founders of the various social groups (**marga, suku, kampung**). Other artefacts such as the bride's headgear or the brass containers (for **sirih** or blackening the teeth) were also shaped like boats.

Moreover, processions during such occasions seem to have always been organised so as to provide a spatial classification of various lower social groups (**suku**) within a ship-shaped pattern representing the superior social order (**marga**). Specific **suku** were given the names and took the spatial position of the **jurubatu** (a common Malay name for the mate, in charge of the anchor at the fore part of the ship), or the **jurumudi** (the helmsman, sitting aft). But possibly the most important transition rite in Lampung, calling for the expression of the complete range of symbols, would have been the so-called **papadon** ceremony, during which social rank was acquired (the **papadon** itself was a wooden chair decorated with mythical animals to which the ranked person was entitled in the village **balai** after going through the ritual). Only those who had raised the **papadon** were then allowed to erect a kind of arch in front of their houses, decorated with ship, bird and snake motives. Finally, those who had attained the highest ranks were allowed to ride to ceremonies and **adat**-meetings in wooden ships on wheels with their bows carved in the shape of hornbills or **garudas**. The same carriage was used to bring the leaders' bodies, in full regalia, to the graveyard. Houses of high-ranking persons had cross-beams giving them the shape of a boat, and ship-cloths were inserted between the main poles and the roof-beams.

One last example in such a comprehensive inventory, and a very revealing one at that: during the leaders' **adat**-meetings in the **balai**, each one of them had the long ship-cloth to which he was entitled hung in front of him, thus creating again another spatial classification of the various social groups within the larger social framework.

Nowhere other than in Lampung country in the societies from the western half of the Archipelago do we find such a complex set of symbols converging towards the boat motive. But one may find here and there several discrete elements of this set represented in rituals. These are mostly found, as expected again, when **rites de passage** are concerned. If such separate elements have survived, one should think that fuller sets of representations would have been present at some earlier time, when they would still have been essential to revalidate social order at different levels.

Lampung ship-cloths are known to have been given such names as **tampan jung galuh** ("diamond, or princess (?) junk") or **tampan jung tiang condong** ("junk with a raking mast"). [20] In a similar fashion, rich weavings bearing the name **kain** or **songket jong sarat** ("fully laden junk") appear in Malay or Javanese classical literature. The East Javanese **Babad Sembar**, describing the attire of a Blambangan

prince ready to fight a battle, mentions such a **songket jong sarat**. During marriage ceremonies in Selangor, the commoner bridegroom's "bridal mat" was replaced, when a Raja was involved, by a "quilt, embroidered in a manner called **jung sarat**". In the *Hikayat Dewa Mandu*, we find a **kafan jong sarat** appearing in a burial ritual.[21] Thus we find again textiles with boat motives, at least in their names, associated with rank and **rites de passage**.

The Malay **puan**, or **sirih** container, is another vessel-like artefact which was prominent during marriage ceremonies, particularly those of ranked people. The term **puan** itself does not seem to refer to a boat; but the vessel is often fitted with a kind of rack called **dandan** and this, in turn, is the term usually applied to the stem and stern platforms of local boats. Boat-shaped **sirih** carriers were actually said to be present among the ritual implements of courtly marriage ceremonies described in the 18th century *Adat Raja-raja Melayu*. [22] The latter seem to have been quite common in the Archipelago from early times. The term **lancang** (which appears as early as the 9th century in Old Balinese inscriptions within lists of boats) is the High Balinese form used for a betel-container. It is also found as **lalancang** in Sundanese. The earliest appearance of this boat-name to describe a betel-container seems to be that in the Old Javanese *Agastyaparwa*. One such gold **lancang** still belongs to the **pusaka** of the Susuhunan of Surakarta. [23] Considering this evidence, it is easier to interpret confidently Ma Huan's vivid 15th century description of Javanese marriage rites: when a man escorts his bride home, among other objects, a boat is decorated with areca-nuts, betel-leaves and sewn strings of flowers and grasses by "neighbours, friends and relations". [24] This is clearly a reference to some kind of **lancang sirih**-container.

\* \* \* \* \*

Most of what has been dealt with to this point refers to rituals performed at household level, or to statements on small socio-political systems. Pre-European (or pre-Islamic) Philippines, which provided me with a starting point, offered a good example of a society in which such polities had probably undergone little influence from imported State conceptions.

Ninth century Javanese epigraphs support the view that minor political systems under their own **ratu**, still little removed from the **wanua** level, would have been common in Java only three generations earlier. [25] This seems to describe a situation close enough to that found some eight centuries later in the Philippines. In spite of this remark, later Javanese society does not seem, at first sight, to have expressed at State level the kind of statements we have observed elsewhere at a lower level, and that will be observed at State level in Malay societies. The environment is indeed no longer conducive to it in the Central Javanese courts. But the numerous prow-figures still to be found in the court museums of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, that seem to have been part of stately craft used on the Bengawan Solo, could possibly lead to some unexpected discoveries, when properly studied. [26] Various musical themes played in Central Javanese courts still carry names referring to boats: one of these, called **babar layar** (lit.: "unfurling the sail") was in the 19th century especially reserved in

Yogyakarta for the Sultan and the Crown Prince.[27] Pasisir traditions, and their relationship with the maritime environment, also need to be closely investigated with these questions in mind, before any proper conclusion can be drawn regarding Javanese societies.[28] One should furthermore note here that in funeral ceremonies held at court level in ancient Java, boat symbolism was clearly present. During the posthumous ritual (*śrāddha*) in honour of the Rājapatni held in the capital in 1362 (as described in the *Nāgara Kertagama*), bishops and minor functionaries (*mantri*) had their offerings brought in boat (*banawa*)-shaped carriers, "their size: in shape true ships (*phalwa*)". A century later, Mpu Tanakung describes another such *śrāddha* ritual in his poem *Banawa Sekar* ("Flower Boat"). The offerings are again shaped in various symbolic forms, but the most beautiful are those of the host king, in the shape of a boat made of flowers (*jong sekar*), complete with sail, rudder and keel.[29]

As we move further west, we come across large political systems in which boat symbolism is currently expressed. The Malay Sultanates were obviously quite fond of fully fledged boat metaphors to express their own perception of political institutions.

Nowhere was the "ship of state" metaphor expressed better than in the Perak Sultanate. Perak Malays conceived their *negeri* explicitly as a ship, with the ruler as her captain (*nakhoda*) and some of the ministers as members of the crew: they were said to be as the mate (*jurubatu*) whose station is forward, as the helmsman (*jurumudi*), as "he who wields the chief starboard paddle", (*dayong peminggang kanan*), i.e. sitting nearest to the part of the ship occupied by the Raja, as the same on the port side, as the poler of the ship (*pergalah*) or as "the person who bales the ship if she leaks" (*timba ruang*), i.e. who removes any danger threatening the country.[30]

When the Maritime Laws of Melaka were written down near the end of the 15th century, the same theme was then developed, in an inverted fashion, as if by looking through a mirror. As the ruler was on shore, so was the *nakhoda* at sea, and the same went for the government and the crew: the helmsman was the *bandahara*; the *jurubatu* was the *temenggong*, and the petty-officers in charge of starboard and port (*tukang kanan dan kiri*) were the courtiers.[31] On the other hand, the impossibly dangerous situation of the existence of two rulers in one single kingdom is often reiterated in Malay literature with a reference to the situation aboard a ship: "You know how it is in a *perahu* with two captains and in a country with two kings".[32]

A brief excursion further east, into the different cultural context of the Mandar kingdom of Pembawang, and we have the three chief ministers (*pa'bicara*) together with the officers of their council, who bear the name "the three sails (or masts)" (*pallayarang tellu*).[33]

Back into Malay country, in Riau, another well established tradition is that of the *Lancang Kuning* (the "Yellow Lancang"), taken as a metaphor for the ruler's power and the State.[34] A popular *pantun* of the area makes this perfectly clear:

Lancang Kuning berlayar malam	The Lancang Kuning sails at night
Haluan menuju kelaut dalam	Her bows towards high seas
Kalau nakhoda kurang paham	If her nakhoda is ignorant
Alamat kapal akan tenggelam	She is bound to be wrecked

This should be understood as: "In times of danger, if the ruler is unenlightened, the State will disappear".[35]

Sailing fleets led by the rulers of the Archipelago were obviously necessary for inter-island voyages or warfare. As such, they are often referred to in local literature and one is struck by the recurrence of long, often florid, lists of boat names. Such lists appear in early epigraphs such as the 923 AD Old Balinese inscription of Sembiran, and they are found again in later Javanese texts such as the *Dewa Ruci*. [36] They are usually mentioned in a rather matter-of-fact way. But there are specific occasions which call for special care by the authors and it is no wonder that such occasions are provided, once again, when *rites de passage* are involved, such as marriages, deaths or foundations. The most remarkable descriptions of such fleets are to be found in Malay literature.

When Lambu Mangkurat of Banjarmasin traveled by sea to Majapahit to request a consort of royal blood for a local princess, he had his fleet prepared, together with his "ship of state" named Prabajaksa (which is also the name of the *dalem ageng* of Central Javanese kratons). The latter's description in the *Hikayat Banjar* is worth quoting in full, as it is the redundancy of the listed symbols, the excessive "decoration", that is meaningful in the present context. "The symbols, 'like words in a language', are manipulated to make statements." [37]

"He sailed in full state on board the yacht called Prabajaksa, availing himself of the insignia of royalty left by his father Ampu Jatmaka: two vertical streamers adorned with gold, two tasseled staves adorned with gold, four pennons decorated with gold paint, a braided streamer looking like a centipede embroidered with gold thread and twenty pikes with tufts of red feathers adorned with spangles of gold; his lances had *biring* blades inlaid with gold, their shafts were decorated with dark-red and gold paint, not to mention two state sunshades decorated with gold paint, two state lances shaped like frangipani buds, inlaid with gold and with their shafts banded with gold. The yacht was adorned with marquetry of gold; its sails were of the finest cloth; the clew-lines, the stays and the sheets were of silk and had tassels of pearls; the rudder was of *timbaga suasa* (a copper and gold alloy), the oars of iron-wood with bands of gold and the anchor gear of undamascened steel. The ships sailing behind her were also fully dressed." [38]

The author of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* similarly indulges in an unusually florid description of the royal galley *Mendam Berahi* (lit.: "Love Madness"), built specially to fetch the Princess of Majapahit, with whom the Sultan of Malaka fell in love:

"Her hull was made of planks covered with yellow, red and blue velvet. Her Cabin was made of glass and its roof of yellow and red glass, and decorated with pendants of scroll patterns painted yellow; and its door was decorated with losenge patterns. (...) This galley was exceedingly well built."

It is revealing to note the words of the *patih* Gajah Mada when he

reported to his sovereign that a large fleet had laid anchor in his harbour, and that:

"(...) one galley [was] so beautiful that it looked like the conveyance of a king who had come for a marriage proposal"[39]

Once again, in the **Kindung Sunda**, the episode of the princess brought to marry the King of Majapahit is the occasion for a detailed description of the fleet of two hundred large ships and two thousand smaller ones, that carried "to the last man" the people of Sunda, the King and the Queen, all the princes, ministers and their followers, the whole army with arms, buffaloes, horses and elephants, gamelans sounding and banners in the wind.[40] Rather than the "ship of state" itself, it is the whole fleet and its passengers that provide the metaphor for the global ordered political system.

One last example, taken from the **Sejarah Melayu**, once again clearly reveals the ubiquitous symbols of rank and hierarchy, as well as the image of the wholeness of the social group in motion. The occasion is that of the important foundation of Singapura by Sri Tri Buana:

"So vast was the fleet that there seemed to be no counting of it; the masts of the ships were like a forest of trees, their pennons and streamers were like driving clouds and the state umbrellas of the Rajas like cirrus. So many were the craft that accompanied Seri Teri Buana, the sea seemed to be nothing but ships. (...) And the whole fleet - royal **lancang**, **pelang** for royal slumber, court **jong**, **bidar** that were paddled, **jong** with the royal kitchens, **teruntum** for fishing with the **jala** net, **terentang** for bathing [?] - put out to sea with a countless host of escorting vessels."[41]

This is possibly the best time to recall what Chao Ju-Kua wrote in 1225 about the king of Srivijaya (no "decoration" being attached to this description by a foreigner):

"When the King goes out, he sits in a boat; his body is wrapped in a piece of cloth; he is sheltered by a silk sunshade and guarded by men bearing lances."[42]

This does not sound like a mere acknowledgement of topographical conditions that would have forced the king to travel always by boat. The description of the (modest) stately pomp of the occasion makes it clear that this is a ceremonial affair: the piece of cloth (a ship-cloth?), the (yellow?) sunshade and the lances may all be interpreted as symbols of power in a Malay context.

The ritual function of sailing off with a fleet in full state is quite explicit when observed in Eastern Indonesia. Two examples, five centuries apart, will suffice to demonstrate this. In the early 1580's, while sailing in the Raja Empat area, a Portuguese witnessed a fleet "with seven thousand men, who went to sea to mourn the death of their Queen."[43] In present day Tanimbar Islands, the inter-village alliance renewal (in the form of highly ritualised warfare) remains the most striking ceremony. One village gathers a fleet of boats to sail out and meet the other village community. I will quote from Susan McKinnon, who observed the ritual:

"In the ritual songs which praise the quality of the boats, they are said to be as swift as birds, as fearsome as sea snakes, as bold as a flash of lightning, and as brilliant as the shimmering sun and moon. Moreover, the boats are laden not only with men and women of high rank, but also with all the gold and other valuables possessed by the village. The boats of certain villages are said to possess a particularly strong radiance or brilliance."

Later in the ceremony, the visitors dance and the image of the boat is again prominent in their songs:

"Much praise is lavished upon the form, quality, and cargo of the visitors' boat, which is said to be made of hard, smooth and slick substances. Its prow board is of smooth ironwood, while its keel is of ivory, or of a shiny hard wood. (...) The boat is likened to a cock who struts about displaying his finery: his tall tail feathers, his golden feathers which are like the rays of the sun. (...) The boat possesses an ivory hull like the new moon. (...) The flashing brilliance and glory of the boat derives, of course, from the many fine valuables it wears, and from its cargo of nobles dressed in radiant adornments. (...) The boat trails its fine and flashy decorations, while it wears antique loincloths and sarongs, which are also paradigmatic of persons of high noble birth. (...) The boat promenades, struts, shows off, and laughs."[44]

One is indeed reminded here of the fully dressed "ship of state" of Banjarmasin, radiant with redundant golden ornaments.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another theme that needs to be examined is that of the boat burials. Both in Continental and Insular Southeast Asia, as well as in the Pacific, ethnographical evidence points to the fact that boat burials were widespread under a variety of forms, as primary or secondary burials. Archaeological evidence also abounds, from Peninsular Malaysia to Sarawak and the Philippines.[45] The Austronesian vocabulary is again very explicit about this, as the same word often means both "boat" and "coffin" (or else may be related to death). *Bangka/Kabang* and cognate terms in Java, Sumba or among the Bare'e are a good example of such words. The term *kalamba* used locally for the stone cists of Sulawesi also means "boat".[46] Malay terms such as *larong*, or *long* and its cognate *palong*, similarly convey both connotations.[47]

Many aspects of boat burial practices may be linked to the quasi-universal belief in psychopomp boats, vehicles needed for the souls to travel to the other world. However, at such a crucial stage, individuals and society need reassuring and the universal order is then clearly expressed. This "ship of the dead", or "flying ship" as it is often termed, whether the coffin proper or a small model used in rituals, is loaded with cosmic symbols: being associated with the celestial hornbill and the chthonian snake, the tree of life and houses, it is also a representation of the encompassing cosmological sphere.[48] Within this sphere, at a lower hierarchical level, one also finds the now familiar statement about social order.

On the one hand, in islands such as Timor Laut or Kei, as well as in most of Melanesia, it has been reported that boat burials were a mark of honour reserved for distinguished persons, mostly chiefs, but also priests or warriors.[49] The Borneo Kayan used to build large wooden structures on poles, in which the bodies of a chief, his faithful followers and slaves were placed, together with his war boat.[50] On the other hand, mass burials in one large boat bring us even closer to our leading thread: it is the whole "boatload" - i.e. the minimal social group - that follows its leader in his last voyage. Thus the expression of social order is signified all the way through. In Pulau Pengujan, a small island off Pulau Bintan (Riau) there is a large tomb, the stone markers of which are 12.90m apart. It is said to be that of an Acehnese **panglima** buried with his crew and his boat after a battle with the Portuguese in early 16th century.[51] Whether archaeological excavations prove this local legend to be founded or not, the mere fact that this kind of statement can be made in Western Indonesia in the 19th century is sufficient proof that mass burials have not always been an alien practice in the area. The existence of similar practices in Insular Southeast Asia is confirmed by the testimonies of early Spanish chroniclers of the Philippines, where they seem to have been current. As one would have expected, they were associated with the **datu** and their **baranggay**, both artefact and socio-political unit. It is worth quoting the mid-17th century description of a Visayan custom by the Jesuit Francisco Colin:

"A short time before the Faith was brought to the Island of Bohol, one of their chiefs ordered that he be buried in a type of boat they call **barangay**, together with seventy slaves in arms, ammunition and victuals, in the same manner that he used in his lifetime when he would go out to raid and plunder." [52]

"Slaves" are the ones to be sacrificed to accompany the **datu's** soul into its last journey, but it seems reasonable to consider them as substitutes for the more complex entourage of a chief (slaves and bondsmen being furthermore a constituent part of the latter's **baranggay**).

\* \* \* \* \*

Before concluding this paper and examining various reasons why the boat as an artefact has been imparted such a symbolising potential and was so efficient in suggesting metaphors for social order, I will consider a specific term which has been associated with shipping from the earliest historical times and which has survived as the name of a character still very much alive in the folk traditions of the Archipelago. The term is **puhawang** and the character is usually known as "Sea-captain (**juragan** or **nakhoda**) Dampu Awang". Analysis of this will provide us with further insights into the symbolising process that takes ships and shipping as its central theme. I will not deal in this paper with the Dampu Awang tradition: this desacralised myth would probably form one of the leading threads of a study on the symbolics of exchange systems.[53]

The proper name Dampu Awang has its origins in the Javanese title **dang mpu hawang**. **Dang** is an honorific prefix denoting a

religious person of distinction; (**m**)**pu** is similarly used for distinguished persons, often but not exclusively of religious status.[54] The possible meaning of (**h**)**awang** we will examine later. The title **puhawang** first appears as a set expression meaning "ship-master" as early as the last quarter of the 7th century AD, in the Srivijayan Old Malay inscription of Telaga Batu. It is often found again with the same meaning in early Malay and Javanese epigraphs, as well as in Old Javanese literature, in texts such as the 12th century **Smaradahana** and **Hariwangsa**. Its meaning "ship-master" is further confirmed by the **Sung shih** where a Javanese title of 993 AD is transcribed as **p'o ho wang** and translated as "master of the ship".[55]

The Malay word **pawang** clearly derives from the Old Malay **puhawang**, both phonetically and semantically. It is found in Classical Malay literature with the meaning of "ship-master".[56] However, all dictionaries give a wider meaning to the word: a **pawang** is "an expert in any art believed to need the use of magic" (among which, judging from the examples, fishing is prominent), and also, in some areas, a "shaman, sorcerer, medicine-man".[57] My point here is not to demonstrate which one of these acceptations antedates the other, but only to bring forward evidence that clearly proves the complementarity of both in Austronesian speaking societies.[58]

The chief technical operators, viz. the experts in shipbuilding, in seamanship and/or in fishing seem to have always been the chief performers in the rituals linked to their professional activity.[59] Their expertise is not only that provided by their technical skills, but also that of the religious or spiritual powers they need, being in charge of the government of a discrete social group, and having to fight against powerful natural forces. The Maritime Laws of Melaka when defining the responsibilities of the pilot, clearly state his dual role: as the **de facto** master of the crew at sea, apart from his numerous technical skills, the **malim**

ought not to forget to pray to Allah and his Prophet to remove all dangers. He is on board as the Imam [is ashore], and the passengers and the crew are as the followers of the Imam in prayer.[60]

Considering this, it is no wonder that the Arabic **mualim** ("he who knows, who is an expert; a pilot") has easily been adopted in the Archipelago with a meaning parallel to that of **puhawang/pawang** (through a reversed process, **malim** has come to mean "shaman" among the Kubu of Sumatra).[61]

One is furthermore reminded here of the 682 AD Srivijayan inscription of Kedukan Bukit. Is it a mere coincidence (or am I being carried away by my subject?) that the only known inscription from Insular Southeast Asia which describes a sovereign's two journeys by **boat** links these events, on the one hand, to the foundation of some kind of polity, for which the term **vanua** appears (the inscription is very unfortunately broken right after the latter word), and on the other hand, to the acquisition of spiritual power (**siddhayātra**), which we know by now is among the prerequisites for a ship-master, as well as for the ruler whom he often replaces in metaphorical statements? The same term **siddhayātra** is found in two other Southeast Asian inscriptions. In a 5th century epigraph on the Malay Peninsula, it is



associated with a local "great sea-captain". In a 9th century inscription from Campa, it is linked to a court dignitary who twice travelled by sea to Java. Again, is it a mere coincidence that in the only three Southeast Asian inscriptions known to use the term *siddhayātra* we find this acquisition of spiritual power associated with seafaring?[62]

As a concluding remark to this digression on the relationship between the technical and religious or spiritual powers of the ship-masters as leaders of self-contained social groups, one may note a recent resurgence of this statement in modern Philippines. A group of Filipino poets has given itself the name "Caracoa", a term applied to the well-known ships formerly plying the waters of Mindanao or the Moluccas (usually known as *kora-kora* on the Indonesian side). The editors of their journal justify this choice by stating that in this "caracoa" - a clear metaphor for the Philippine society - "the poet sat alone at the far end of the boat, manning the rudder (...) He was far back yet he provided direction".[63] From poet/shaman to helmsman/ship-master, from *pawang* to *puhawang*, it is the same concept one is obviously confronted with. In O.W. Wolters' terms, we are dealing with the leadership of "men of prowess", attributed with an above-average "soul stuff", which explains and distinguishes their performance: signs of spiritual quality would have been the most effective source of leadership.[64]

One may now proceed one step further in the analysis of the term *puhawang*. Damais has clearly stated that it should be understood as being composed of the prefix *pu* followed by *hawang*, but he did not attempt to provide a meaning for the latter. As noted by de Casparis, *hawang* has no direct connection with navigation. When it appears in Old Malay or Old Javanese epigraphs, it seems to be a title used by high dignitaries or priests. Zoetmulder adds that it appeared among the persons attached to the *kraton*. [65] These glosses alone provide no clues as to the etymology of *puhawang*/ship-master. However, one may note at this point that among the Brunei Malays, the title *awang* is borne by an intermediate social class (different from the nobility, but higher than the commoners) which was closely linked to the high non-noble offices (they actually define themselves as the descendants of holders of those offices). But a remarkable point is that the ship-masters/merchants of Brunei (the *nakhoda*), who used to be highly respected persons, do seem to have been associated with the *awang* class.[66] Though this is not conclusive *per se*, it brings us one step closer to establishing a relationship between (h)*awang* and the leadership of a boat.

Through most of this paper, we have observed that many statements expressed through boat symbolism could be read in a similar way in varied cultural contexts ranging from the far east to the far west of the Archipelago, in different times and places. Now, recent anthropological researches into classification systems of Eastern Indonesian societies have brought to light some very precise data on symbolic associations of specific parts of the boat. In Halmahera, within the familiar dual cosmological and geographical classification sea/inland, the sea is associated with masculine gender, the *elder brother*, fishing, *political life* and the *aft part of the boat*. [67]

In Roti, we find the husband associated with the rudder (thus again the aft part of the boat), and in the Kei Islands, he is compared

to the ship-master (the wife-taking group would formerly give a boat during marriage exchanges).[68]

In the Lampung area, it seems that the upstream **suku** took the **jurubatu**'s place in ritual processions (thus the fore part of the ship). Though information seems to be lacking on the opposite direction, it is reasonable to conclude from the above that the downstream **suku** would have taken the **jurumudi**'s place and thus be associated with the aft part of the ship.[69] This does not tell us about the associations of the elder brother, but at least it leads one to believe that classification patterns similar to those of Eastern Indonesia may also have existed in Sumatran societies.

Political life and the aft part of the boat (or the rudder) carry us back to the leadership of the ship-master/helmsman on a minimal social unit, a familiar metaphor by now. The elder brother, or the husband, on the other hand, suggest a relationship with Malay or Javanese **abang** ("elder brother, husband"). Considering that, phonetically, the passage **(h)awang abang** poses no problem, one cannot ignore that **hawang** and **abang** may well be cognates in Malay and/or Javanese (and one should remember that, basing himself on the first quotation he gives, Zoetmulder also glossed **hawang** as: "master, husband (?); cf. **puhawang**").[70] The title **(h)awang** may thus ultimately have had to do with an elder brother's or a husband's authority on a minimal social unit, for which both boats and houses offered the best metaphorical expression (hence the meaning of "ship-master" attached to **puhawang**). I am quite aware, though, of the fact that such an hypothesis remains, at best, informed speculation, considering that there are as yet no reports of fully fledged classification patterns similar to those of Eastern Indonesia among the Malays or the Javanese.

\* \* \* \* \*

Having examined multiple boat motives and having tried to organise into a system their seemingly arbitrary occurrences, the first conclusion that one may draw is that when societies from Insular Southeast Asia make statements about themselves and about the order that structures them, through the detour of a more or less conscious symbolism, the boat is what they quite often view themselves as. I did remark in passing that boat symbolism was far from univocal: many different statements are made when the boat motive is evoked. On the one hand, simple exegesis akin to popular etymologies are often provided to account for its presence: the vessel is taken literally as a means of transportation that mechanically helps in the transition from one stage to another, or even from one island to another, when "migrations" or overseas ancestors are claimed in myths. Of the same order are houses that look like boats (even when such statements are confirmed **a posteriori** by structural characteristics or plain superadded decoration). On the other hand, the main statement which pervades all occurrences of the boat symbol is that of a metaphor for hierarchical levels of social and cosmological systems. Within the all-encompassing cosmological sphere - the boat as a model for the macrocosm - this paper has concentrated on the subsystem in which the boat symbol is used to conceptualise lower hierarchical levels of social, political and economical order: the minimal social unit (in an homothetical rapport with the house), larger social groups (village, **baranggay**,

suku, marga, etc), or the largest encompassing unit of this sub-system, the State itself.

The question now arising is: why was the boat used on such a scale to express statements about social structure? Why was it given such a symbolising potential, on a par with the more obvious house? One has to go further than just to state that ships and shipping played a major role in an island society. Answers that would evoke a period when early Austronesian communities would have lived on boat-houses, as the present day Bajaus do, would also be over-simplistic, apart from being contradicted by archaeological evidence. The importance of the ship during overseas "migrations", though taken into account in many local statements, does not seem more adequate. Satisfactory answers, in fact, are presently lacking, and will only be provided once archaeologists, historians and anthropologists have devoted more of their activities to studying the region's maritime adaptations, a dimension which appears so depressingly under-examined. A line of interpretation which will have to be further verified on the Southeast Asian field may nevertheless be proposed at this stage.

For one thing, ships have always been run according to strict hierarchies, with a clear division between those on board whose job it is to give orders, and those who must obey. This is universally felt as essential to avoid any mishap at sea (and one is reminded here of the common Malay saying about the impossibility of having two captains in a single ship). Anybody who has had some experience in sailing also knows how spatial order is vital on board. Ship-like shapes may thus be seen as an essential organisational principle of an orderly society. In the whole of hierarchical Southeast Asia, social classification is mapped in the ceremonial arrangement in space of individuals or groups of people. The traditional question of a Balinese enquiring about a person's rank: "Where do you sit?", is accurately thought of, in neighboring societies, in terms of places aboard a ship, thus providing a clear image of social order, as enacted in rituals.

Societies in the Pacific as well as in Island Southeast Asia may also have used metaphors related to the building of boats to illustrate social organisation seen as a network of interactions within an interdependent self-contained unity. The building of a vessel may for one thing be seen as the assembly of a complex structure from a number of simple elements. The resultant vessel is a symbol of group achievements and reinforces group solidarity. Both the building and the using of a boat provide a continuity of ceremonial, social and economic activities, during which the chief technical operator - ship-building expert, shipmaster or fishing expert - is also the chief performer of ritual[71] (cf. the relationship between the Old Malay and Old Javanese term *puhawang*, "shipmaster", and the Malay *pawang*, now meaning a shaman).

There are but too few studies on marine-orientated groups in Insular Southeast Asia. From the few available, one may gather some corroborative evidence: "boat groups", "net groups", "fishing units" of Malay fishermen, *passompek* working groups of the Makasar sailors, and the models of hierarchy and authority which are attached to them do all provide images of social units similar to those that pervade boat symbolism.[72]

A second set of provisional conclusions concerns the historical development of Southeast Asian political systems (this does take us back to the theme of this Symposium, from which I am afraid I have much drifted away so as to be able to make my point).

There is very little on pre-14th century political systems gathered from archaeology, epigraphy or local and foreign literary sources which may be interpreted within a boat symbolism grid. I believe there is enough of it at this point to justify further researches, for which the present argument would only be a leading thread. Evidence such as that gathered from modern Eastern Indonesia or from 16th century Philippines can only provide a background for an historical approach to the problem by bringing to light constituent structural elements of Southeast Asian political systems, thus showing what the pre-Indianised or pre-Islamicised political systems would have been like (only to a degree: these societies are not static ones, and any oversimplistic one-to-one identification should be resisted). The richness of the boat motive pattern at the other end of the Archipelago is striking. We have seen how Malay societies, from Srivijaya onwards, were fond of such statements, at all levels. The Lampung case is also interesting: it is one of the richest fields and the fact that it once belonged to the Srivijayan orbe (cf. the Palas Pasemah inscription), makes it even more appealing.

By contrast, early Javanese political systems look rather withdrawn. As already noted, it is too early to reach solid conclusions as Javanese historiography has always turned its back to the sea. It might nevertheless appear that a different localising process took place within Javanese political systems, which would have left aside the essentials of a set of symbolisms, ritual usages and conceptualisations of the social and political order that pervaded the Southeast Asian cultural matrix. This in a way is a rejoinder to Herman Kulke's question (in his paper given at this same Symposium) as to whether the disappearance of the Srivijayan polity from the Southeast Asian scene is linked to the emergence of a Javanese power of a different nature in East Java.

## NOTES

- \* The subject of this paper has compelled me to cover a wide geographical area and to write about cultures with which I have little or no familiarity. In doing so I have had to rely on the help of specialists from various horizons. For the sake of brevity, I wish to thank them all here at once. Peter Carey, Henri Chambert-Loir, Soedarmadji Damais, James Fox, Jean-François Guermontprez, Gilbert Hamonic, Charles MacDonald, Christian Pelras, William Henri Scott, Nikita Sibéroff, Leontine Visser and Peter Worsley have all contributed, in no small way, to the present work. They will recognize their contributions as they read through it. For the risks taken in dealing with such scattered data, and for the unavoidable misinterpretations, I assume full responsibility.
1. Steinmann 1937, 1940; Vroklage 1936, 1937, 1940.
  2. Gittinger 1972; Holmgren & Spertus 1980; van Dijk & de Jonge 1980. Woodward (1980) provides a clear picture of the art historian's new approach to Indonesian textiles.
  3. On the Eastern Indonesian "field of studies", see van Wouden (1968) and James Fox's introduction to the book he edited (1980). Recent studies dealing specifically with boat and house symbolism are: Adams 1974; Barraud 1979, 1983; Kana 1980, 1983; McKinnon 1984; Visser (in press); Yoshida 1980. See also Cunningham 1964.
  4. I should mention here Denys Lombard's work on the "theme of the sea" (1980). His is a different approach, which does not discuss the boat motive as such, but deals with the metaphysical perception Indonesian societies have of the sea. Tobing had also touched upon various aspects evoked in this paper in his commentary of the Bugis Amanna Gappa code of maritime laws. Among features of what he called an "Indonesian totalitarian mentality", he listed the perception of the boat as a microcosm, in relation with the total social macrocosm. He carried out this demonstration to find the origins of **gotong royong**, guided democracy and economy (Tobing [1977:71 ff]) after a thesis written in 1961).
  5. On this last approach, see van Esterik 1984 (specifically p.87).
  6. **Customs of the Tagalogs**, in Blair & Robertson 1903-09, VII:174.
  7. See, for instance, the titles of two recent articles: "The Pocket Village. How the Early Settlers Beached their Boats and Became Barangays" (Casiño 1977-78), or "The Barangay, Origin of our Basic Socio-Political Unit" (Patanño 1977-78). This theory was first brought forward by Paterno (1892). One may also refer to the even more "official" political pamphlet by A.G. Gabot (**Barangay: People Power. The Philippines' Grassroot Government from Magellan to Marcos** [sic], Manila 1976).
  8. Panganiban 1972:s.v.; Wolff 1972:s.v.; Reid 1971:No.41. It is interesting to note that Panganiban gives the term **barkada** or its affixed form **barkadahan** (from the Spanish, literally a "shipload of passengers") as another synonym of **barangay**. On the boat itself, as described in Spanish sources and as found in recently discovered wrecksites in Butuan, see Scott 1982.
  9. **Kabang** ('abang) is clearly related to the very common Austronesian word **bangka/wangka** (usually for "boat") by metathesis. For examples

9. (continued)  
of **kabang** in Philippine languages, see Reid 1971:No's 41 & 142. Cognate terms are also found in Mon-Khmer languages (see the Old Mon **kbang** for "sea-going vessel"; Shorto 1971:67).
10. In Old Javanese, the two terms **wanus/wanwa** for "inhabited place or area, village, settlement", and specifically for the smallest political unit, and **banawa** for "boat, ship" are now clearly differentiated; linguists, to the best of my knowledge, have not claimed for them a common origin (Zoetmulder 1982:s.v. **banawa** actually proposes, with a questionmark, a rather improbable Sanskrit etymology). I am not competent to decide whether the median **u** and **a** have both evolved from a common root. However, considering the fact that the Ngaju term for boat is **banama**, with a median **a** (Schärer 1963), and the general Austronesian context of boat/social unit correspondence, I would tend to think that **wanua** and **banawa** may be cognates. The dual association boat(load)/house(hold) should actually be prolonged into a broader latent configuration: the word **banwa** may also mean "heaven" or "forest" in various languages of the Philippines (MacDonald, in press).
11. MacKnight & Mukhlis 1979:279.
12. MacDonald 1979:60-61.
13. Harahap 1952:14; Clamagirand 1979:52-53.
14. From the 1st edition of 1754; reference kindly sent to me by W.H. Scott.
15. Nimmo 1972:25-27.
16. See the references given in note 3.
17. They are also said at times to "look like them"; the same goes, among others, for Toraja houses. But the boat-shape of the roofs derives from architectural techniques, rather than the opposite: the "faîtière tendue", for instance, is one of the most widespread carpentry techniques in Southeast Asia (it already appears on Bronze Age artefacts; Dumarçay 1981); despite the external appearance it gives to roofs, this has nothing to do with shipbuilding. It is thus a misinterpretation to say that houses look like boats because their architecture has been influenced by shipbuilding (Lewcock & Brans 1975).
18. Data on the Lampung boat motives were collected from Schnitger (1964:197-202), Steinmann (1937), Gittinger (1972), Holmgren and Spertus (1980) and van Dijk & de Jonge (1980). Narrow interpretations of ship motives may also be found in van der Hoop (1949:cxliv-cxlv) and Holt (1967:21-22).
19. Du Bois 1952:330-332.
20. Steinmann (1937:122) translates **galuh** by "large", for some unknown reason. The name "jung tiang condong" is that given to a **tampam** in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, Département Océanie (pièce 34.71.28), acquired in Palembang in 1934.
21. Winarsih Arifin, **Babad Sembar**, canto II/24 (in preparation, soon to be published by the EFEO); Skeat 1900:380; Chambert-Loir 1980:278,327; Wilkinson 1959:s.v. **jong**.
22. Skeat 1949; Sudjiman 1983:71,199,230.

23. On all this see the long note in Damais 1955:649-650, and Jasper & Pirngadie 1927:239, fig.354.
24. Mills 1970:95.
25. Wisseman 1983:17.
26. See Pigeaud (1938:para.196) for a description of such a river journey, on a wedding occasion.
27. Peter Carey, personal communication, 14 May 1984.
28. I have not as yet been able to ascertain the significance of the boat-motive appearing in the **kapal kandes** ("stranded ship") pattern of Pasisir batiks.
29. Pigeaud 1960-63, I:50-51; III:77; IV:192-193. Zoetmulder 1974:365-366, 506-507.
30. Shellabear 1885; Andaya 1979: xiii,28. B. Andaya illustrates this with a 1876 map of the state of Perak said to represent it in the shape of a ship. H. Chambert-Loir kindly read the **jawi** legends for me: it appears that there are no references to a ship or its crew in this map.
31. Winstedt & de Jong 1956:30,32,52.
32. **Tuhfat al-Nafis**, quoted in Drakard 1984, where this ideological statement is discussed at length.
33. Tenriadji 1960:108.
34. Effendy 1969:12-13. Similarly, the ships belonging to the heroes of the Bugis epic **I La Galigo** should be considered when these texts are studied in more detail. Sawerigading's ship, the **Wakka Tana**, is loaded with cosmic symbols, and its name alone is revealing: **wakka**, for "ship", is cognate to **bangka**; **tana** is understood as both the territory and its inhabitants (Kern 1930:174).
35. Professor J.M. Gullick kindly informed me that during the 1955 elections of Malaysia, the UMNO party polling symbol - a very effective one it seems - was a ship. It is tempting to interpret this as the resurgence of a traditional Malay symbol.
36. Brandes 1889:44,46. Poerbatjaraka 1940:9-10 (the **Dewa Ruci** dates from the 15th or the 16th century, depending on interpretations; but the list of boats could well be a later interpolation). The **Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis** provides a good array of very matter of fact descriptions of Malay war fleets (Overbeck 1926:360,366,370,374, etc.).
37. Wolters 1982:84.
38. Ras 1968:294-297.
39. **Hikajat Hang Toeah** 1948, I:127,130.
40. Berg 1927:16-17,76-77.
41. Winstedt 1938:58-60; Brown 1952:28-29; my own translation for the passage with the various types of craft.
42. Hirth & Rockhill 1911:60.

43. Boxer & Manguin 1979:188, and n.48 for references to another such 16th century example taking place in "Papua".
44. McKinnon 1984:9-12, 19-20.
45. Evans 1932; Harrison 1958:584-590; the best summary to date on such archaeological evidence is that of Tenazas 1973.
46. Adriani 1928:s.v.; Adriani & Kruyt 1951, II:481; Vroklage 1940:223-234. On funerals in Roti, boat-coffins and boat symbolism see Fox 1973.
47. Wilkinson 1959:s.v. Terms akin to Malay **long** ("coffin") or **palong** ("dug-out canoe") are also to be found in many Austronesian languages (from a Proto-Austronesian base meaning "to hollow out"); they designate a "dug-out" craft. The same applies to the Mon-Khmer root **lung** (cf. Shorto 1971:s.v. **dlung**; Pou 1981:112-114). Boat-coffin burials are common in Continental Southeast Asia as well: Vietnamese archaeologists have found many such burials in sites pertaining to the Dong-son culture (personal communication by Professor Tran Quoc Vuong).
48. Schärer 1963:22-23.
49. Vroklage 1936:718. Birket-Smith (1973:56-57) is useful in summarising most of this evidence in a very short form.
50. Roth 1968, I:146-147.
51. Information kindly offered me by Bapak Hamza Yunus of Pulau Penyengat (in December 1981, while working in the area with a team of the Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional). The source of this evidence is a manuscript in Bapak Hamza's possession (**Berita District van Bintan**, by Muhamad Apan, ca.1934).
52. Colin 1900-01, I:69; another such example is given in the late-16th century manuscript known as the Boxer Codex (Quirino & Garcia 1958:415-416).
53. The best account of the Dampu Awang problem is provided by Worsley's commentary on the **Babad Buleleng** (Worsley 1972:10, 25, 143-147, 222-223).
54. Zoetmulder 1982:s.v.
55. de Casparis 1956:20, 32-37, 209, 358, 367; Kern 1920:196-197; Damais 1960:25-29.
56. See, for instance, the **Sejarah Melayu** (Winstedt 1938:78). **Juragan** or **nakhoda** have in modern times replaced **pawang/puhawang**.
57. See, among other dictionaries, that of Wilkinson 1959.
58. In languages other than Malay or Javanese, titles such as the Bugis **puang**, used for persons of high rank (though not for the nobility), and specifically for the **bissu** priests, most probably are cognates of **pawang/puhawang**.
59. See, for instance, what Friedericicy (1931:501-503) has to say on the "magical powers" of the **nakhoda** of Bone; Pelly (1975:14, 70-73) on the Ara shipbuilders; Firth (1946:122-125) and Frazer (1960:51) on Malay fishermen.
60. Winstedt & de Jong 1956:38-39.



61. Wilkinson 1959:s.v. **malim**. One may also add that in many rituals of the Archipelago the shaman is said to be the helmsman of the "flying boat" and to pilot man "out of darkness and into light; out of sickness into health; from death into life", etc. (Scharer 1963:137).
62. Coedès 1930:34-35; Chhabra 1935:19; Huber 1911:309.
63. **Caracoa**, the Poetry Journal of the Philippine Literary Arts Council, 1, 1982.
64. Wolters 1982: chap.1 and append.A.
65. Damais 1960:27, n.5; de Casparis 1956:208-209; Zoetmulder 1982:s.v. **hawang 2**.
66. Brown 1970:11, 14-15, 26-27, 171-172.
67. Leontine Visser, personal communication 21/8/1983, and Visser (in press).
68. Barraud 1983; James Fox, personal communication, June 1984.
69. Gittinger 1972:35, n.2.
70. Zoetmulder 1982:s.v. **hawang 1**.
71. See Tippet (1968:84 ff) on the symbolism attached to the "sacred canoe" of the Fiji Islands. For similar interpretations of boat symbolism in East Sumba, cf. Adams 1974:337.
72. Firth 1946; Fraser 1960; Pelly 1975; Badarudin 1979.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part outlines the specific procedures and protocols that must be followed when recording and reporting data. This includes details on how to collect, analyze, and present information in a clear and concise manner.

3. The third part addresses the role of management in overseeing the implementation of these procedures. It stresses the need for regular communication and collaboration between different departments to ensure that all aspects of the process are covered.

4. The final part of the document provides a summary of the key points and offers recommendations for further improvement. It encourages a continuous approach to refining the system and adapting it to changing circumstances.



# 10

## Changing Perspectives in Island Southeast Asia

C.C. Macknight

The eastern and southern boundaries of modern Southeast Asia, or rather of the nation-states of which the modern region is comprised, are easily defined. From the Pacific Ocean in the north, an agreed line runs through the centre of New Guinea, across the Arafura and Timor Seas (with a short section yet to be determined) and into the Indian Ocean on the west. Like so many other national boundaries, these limits reflect colonial activities, especially in the first half of this century. To some extent, they seem also to follow the physical geography, though in Irian Jaya and the Aru Islands Indonesia extends beyond the Sunda shelf and intermediate area of Wallacea into areas which, geographically-speaking, belong with other Sahul territories. Similarly, historical links explain the association of neighbouring oceanic islands in the western Pacific with the USA and in the Indian Ocean with Australia.

It is not at all remarkable that these political boundaries and, to a large extent, the categories within which so many other ways of thinking are formed should be determined by such historical circumstances. In the same way, for this southeastern area in the period from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, beyond the Indian and Chinese influences so important in the northern and western parts of modern Southeast Asia, even older processes may have contributed to cultural patterns. In island Southeast Asia, enough is now known of the late prehistory of the region - say, the last few millennia - for the later effects of the events of that period to be traced with some certainty. The most important of these prehistoric processes was the movement of people speaking Austronesian languages.

This knowledge is comparatively new, and it is of some interest to understand the reasons why this should be the case. The systematic study of prehistory in northern Europe arose only in the nineteenth century and it was not until the 1920s and 1930s that Gordon Childe was able to put together a convincing general account of the transition across Europe from hunting to farming, and of later developments. In Southeast Asia, the various late colonial administrations gradually developed effective museums and antiquities services, though the structural remains from the mid-first millennium AD onwards and, on Java, the search for early man consumed much of the effort. By the late 1930s, however, workers throughout the region were in touch with one another and trying to see what sense could be made of the emerging

archaeological evidence. When such work resumed in the 1950s, and much more in the 1960s, it was transformed by the possibility of establishing an absolute chronology through radiocarbon dating. Dating is important not only for its own sake, but more significantly, because it allows the prehistorian to discern movement, development and process in the past.

A good instance of this, and one of great relevance to Southeast Asia, was the solution to the problem of the origin of the Polynesians. The question of where these people, so alike yet so scattered, had come from had been argued since the eighteenth century. By the late 1960s, enough dated evidence had been accumulated for it to be clear that the trail led back to the makers and users of the so-called Lapita style of pottery. This is found north and east of New Guinea dated between about 1500 BC and the time of Christ. Since there is no trace of comparable material culture or language in the central highlands or across the south coast of New Guinea, it was natural to look to the northern Moluccas and the Philippines for yet earlier links.

A detailed synthesis of Oceanic and Southeast Asian prehistory was first set out by Bellwood in 1978.[1] Prehistorians do not need to be reminded of the complexities in linking biological relationships with aspects of culture, including language, but when several kinds of evidence provide consistent patterns, it is possible to reach general conclusions. Bellwood shows how people speaking Austronesian languages, using boats, living in villages, making pottery, growing crops and tending animals came from Taiwan, through the Philippines and into the central part of the Indonesian archipelago. Pottery is the most easily dated of these traits and can be first observed from the Philippines as far south as Timor at about 3000 BC.

It is not yet possible to set out in detail the story of the Austronesian speakers' move into the eastern parts of the archipelago. It is unlikely to have been simple both because of the scattered island geography and, perhaps even more important, because of the comparatively unfavourable environments for agriculture. A good sign of these difficulties is the fact that the new languages are not spoken everywhere; in northern Halmahera and of course in the interior of New Guinea the old languages survived. In Timor, some non-Austronesian languages seem to have been introduced comparatively recently in a kind of backwash.[2] I do not want to suggest anything like a horde of Austronesian speakers on a blitzkrieg through the archipelago, for it was certainly a slow and messy business, with much coming and probably some going. It is better seen as a long process than a single event, but the end result of a region of considerable cultural unity cannot be doubted. The archaeological evidence from Timor and the date for the earliest Lapita pottery in Melanesia suggests that the process was well advanced, at least, by the third millennium BC.

In the western archipelago, the picture is somewhat different. The large islands of Sumatra and Borneo seem to have been cloaked in forest throughout the Holocene, though offering much in the way of rivers and coast for people adapted to a maritime environment. To the south, below 5° south, Java with its rich volcanic soil enjoyed a more seasonal climate. Compared with both the central Bornean jungle or the arid hills of Timor it was an agricultural paradise.

In the present state of research we have almost no direct evidence for when Austronesian speakers may have arrived in the western archipelago. Archaeological work has, understandably, been directed at

either earlier or later problems. However, a number of lines of argument suggest that the date might be comparatively late - say, even into the first millennium BC. The most persuasive, in my view, is the comparative cultural and linguistic similarity across Sumatra and Java especially. If these islands had been long settled by their historic populations, one would expect much greater differentiation. There are no rules for estimating a rate of differentiation and the point must remain impressionistic, though nonetheless valid for that. Secondly, there are some features of Javanese and Malay which suggest that their speakers did not form discrete groups earlier than, perhaps, the first millennium BC.[3] Lastly, there is the negative archaeological evidence. While it is true that recent work in Java has revealed some 'Neolithic' sites, such as Pejaten on the southern outskirts of Jakarta or Kendeng Lembu in East Java, their dating is still very unclear. There is certainly no reason to push the date of such sites back before, say, about 1000 BC. While a negative argument is always risky, I think that had there been a long 'Neolithic' phase on Java and Sumatra, more evidence of it would have come to light by now.

This new view of recent prehistory, sketched here in the barest outline, must profoundly affect our view of the processes at work in the first millennium AD. The most important point is to recognize that the societies eventually exposed to Indian or Chinese influences were not culturally passive. The model of foreign initiative and local reaction is rather less than helpful. The concept of 'local genius' adding its share to, say, the total culture of classical Java may be useful at one level of analysis, but it must not be allowed to slide into assumption about how and why change was brought about. To illustrate this with a simple example, the new view moves the focus of centrality and temporal priority in the archipelago from Java and further west to the Sulu and Celebes Seas. We historians are so accustomed to thinking *ex occidentale lux* in later times, to the mental set of Java against the Outer Islands, that moving to other patterns is difficult. Even with the best will, there is also the peculiarly insidious tyranny of maps on which the seas seem to us to divide not only chunks of land, but also human societies. Especially in archipelagos, it makes at least as much sense to think in terms of the length and exposure of particular coasts, as to consider the land area of islands.

We can also give some description of the culture of the Austronesian speakers to which later influences came, and distinguish this from other cultural situations, most importantly the Mon-Khmer area on the mainland. In any comparisons between Cambodia and Java, it is necessary to see that the classical cultures are building on different bases - to use a static metaphor again. Even where there are similarities in specific cultural traits - for example, both the Mon-Khmer speakers and the Austronesian speakers have an essentially bilateral kinship system - all that we now know about the quite separate historical derivation of the two cultures argues against any but the most remote connection in this respect.

For the purposes of description, four inter-related areas of the culture of Austronesian speakers may be distinguished: language, kinship, the status system and material culture. We have already remarked on the almost total dominance of Austronesian languages in the archipelago and, of course, they are also found in Taiwan to the north, to Hawaii and Easter Island in the Pacific and in the west there is the

still puzzling case of Malagasy. There is no need here to set out the details of their inter-relationship. More is involved than just linguistic similarities, for language also expresses social categories. As Fox has remarked for eastern Indonesia, 'Among the Austronesian speakers, many of [the crucial social] categories form part of a common cultural heritage, and frequently the terms that designate these categories are themselves recognizable cognates.'[4]

A basic assumption of kinship categories in Austronesian speaking societies is bilateralism or non-unilinearity. This principle can be accommodated within a plethora of particular features covering marriage, residence or political relations, all of which presumably reflect specific historical processes.[5] Despite all the variation, however, certain general regularities can be observed. The most significant perhaps is the prominent role of women in these societies. Since status is transmitted through women equally with men and thus held by both equally, it is in no way surprising to find situations in which particular genealogical and political circumstances have resulted in women holding political power in their own right. The Bugis state of Bone in Sulawesi was ruled by a queen several times in its history both before and even after the official adoption of Islam. This bilateral equality has been much affected by the strong male bias of much Islamic thought and traditional Indian culture, but I do not think anyone with firsthand experience of social relations between the sexes in an Austronesian speaking society will have trouble recognizing the continuing strength of the original relationship. As Ann Kumar has shown in her account of the career of a woman soldier in the late eighteenth century Java, that society had at least the makings of equal employment opportunity.[6]

Among Austronesian speakers generally, however, the group of social categories that receives most attention is that concerned with ascriptive status. Among the Bugis, who admittedly take things to extremes, it has been persuasively argued that status identity transcends even gender.[7] It is this aspect of archipelago societies that strikes one first when looking at the area from the viewpoint of Polynesia, as Boon puts it in his study of Bali.[8] In classical Java the Indian-derived titles did not replace the Austronesian status markers.[9] Cognate concepts can be found in far less complex societies. Brigitte Clamagirand, describing the social organization of the Ema, an Austronesian speaking group in Timor, writes that 'A core house gives every man his name, his status, and his network of alliances' and later,

At the communal level ... this social organization is founded on a hierarchy of core houses. Collective rituals are performed by particular individuals for the community as a whole. Performed only in certain core houses ... these rituals involve no exchange of goods. However, if animals are sacrificed, the meat is divided among the core houses in accordance with their status. Each status is associated with a specific cut of meat.[10]

Finally, we can turn to the material culture of the Austronesian speakers. Historical linguistics and archaeology both suggest that from at least their entry into the archipelago these societies have been characterized by knowledge of boats, pottery and village life, and their

economies have depended on the domestication of various plants and animals. Various details can be added such as the use of bark cloth, which seems to be a speciality of Austronesian speakers.[11] Other features, such as the working of bronze and iron, must be later additions, but this only serves to remind us of the dynamism of these societies and the possibilities of contact between them, including especially perhaps contacts across considerable stretches of sea. This general heritage of material culture has also been modified by the loss of particular elements in various ecological situations. The easiest examples come from the process of settling Polynesia, such as the loss of pottery making, but even within the archipelago the range of crops and the elaboration of agriculture vary widely. What is striking, however, is the continuity, such as the way in which societies which are not strongly oriented towards maritime interests still retain the ship as a symbolic device.

So far this paper has not addressed the specific circumstances of the period from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries AD. We have seen that this period, which in historical terms seems comparatively early in the context of the archipelago, especially the eastern part of it, looks rather late in prehistoric terms. Moving beyond the typically generalized account of prehistory, however, how can the historian's thirst for detail be better satisfied? The most striking feature of the period is, of course, the profound cultural influences from beyond the archipelago, from both India and China, that have resulted in various forms of written evidence and architectural remains. From this evidence, much has been deduced about the history of the western parts of the archipelago, up to and including Bali, but it is not our intention here to describe that history. Instead, we wish to look at the rest of island Southeast Asia.

The conventional approach to this subject would be to describe the penetration and 'localization' of discrete cultural elements from either India or China into specific societies across the archipelago and to demonstrate the decline in the number and importance of such elements as one moves further east and, to some extent, north. Away from the (comparative) illumination of Sumatra and Java, there is a penumbra which darkens with distance. No-one would propose that the boundary of foreign influence could be marked by a line on a map, but even the concept of a shading off, a fringe of influence, makes it clear where initiative and stimulus for change are believed to lie. I would want to question that picture of the period, at least when expressed as simply as that, but it is worth following this approach initially to introduce some of the material and problems associated with this material.

We may begin with the matter of Sanskrit vocabulary. As Gonda has so clearly demonstrated,[12] some Sanskrit words may be found in virtually all languages of the archipelago and it would be possible, I believe, to construct from this data some form of chart showing a decline in the extent and sophistication of usage from west to east. But there are problems. Take, for example, the word **punggawa**. In Sanskrit, this means 'bull; hero, eminent person, chief of'. In Javanese, where it occurs comparatively frequently in the classical literature, the meaning has shifted slightly to 'chief, leader; official of high rank'. [13] In the *Nāgarakērtāgama* of 1365 Pigeaud translates it once as 'distinguished serving-men' and again as 'superior serving-men'. [14] In Macassar by the mid-nineteenth century, it meant 'the

leader of an army, a commander-in-chief, the captain of a ship'. [15] From here, the word has entered various north Australian languages with the meaning of anyone in authority, or even just 'the government'. [16] There are two points to notice here. Firstly, there is the progressive nature of the transfer. We can be very confident that the north Australian usage derived from the Macassar, and it is most probable that that, in turn, came from the Javanese. Secondly, there is the question of date. The word cannot have reached north Australia before about 1700 and is probably later. The age of the word in Macassar is unknown, though given the reference to Macassar in the *Nāgarakērtāgama*, it is obviously tempting to say that it could have been as early as the fourteenth century.

These points need to be kept in mind when considering the version of the story of Krishna and the milkmaids recently reported from Seram by Ellen. Not only has the story been adapted to the local context, but the protagonist has been transformed into the Muslim figure of Abu Nawas. [17]

The elements which may, in one way or another, be referred to India are sometimes quite small and deeply imbedded in a local context. The author of the Bugis chronicle of Bone, writing probably in the late seventeenth century, but perhaps reflecting earlier models, says that in the period of lawlessness before the revelation and acceptance of those with the authority to establish proper political relationships, people 'just ate each other like fish do'. [18] The similarity with the Sanskrit concept of *mātsyanyāya* (the way of the fishes) is unlikely to be accidental. [19] For those with eyes to see, ever-fainter traces can be discerned to the furthest extremities of the archipelago. [20]

Tracing Chinese influence means using different materials, but the general picture has many similarities. The areas of most intense Chinese contact in island Southeast Asia were the shores of the South China Sea, including what Wolters has called 'the favoured trading coasts' of southeastern Sumatra and northwestern Java. [21] Even more importantly for the purposes of this paper, as discussed below, the Chinese evidence both in the form of geographical accounts and as ceramics gives us information about northern Borneo and much of the Philippines for which the evidence relating to Indianization is too slight to be of much use.

Moving beyond the South China Sea, the concept of a fringe, this time of Chinese influence, is again helpful. While there is some knowledge of Java, especially after the Yuan attack and early Ming voyaging, it is remarkable how little the Chinese sources, before the seventeenth century, know about even those areas from which, as Wheatley has shown, some of their earlier trade commodities were drawn. [22] In the north, there are useful records for the north coast of Borneo and several places in the Philippines, such as Mindoro (Ma-i). Even somewhere as deep in the archipelago as Butuan on Mindanao sent missions to the Song court early in the eleventh century. [23] Beyond the Celebes Sea, however, there is only a faint awareness, at this early period, of the Moluccas. [24]

Mention of places in the Chinese geographical sources can probably be taken as representing direct contact with those places by some Chinese, even if not the author of the particular work. However, the other main form of evidence, the ceramics, is very different. The

contact it demonstrates might well have been indirect and only have involved Chinese in those areas, mainly around the South China Sea, about which we already know from the written evidence. Until there has been more work on the distribution of types, any comments must be more or less impressionistic, but it is not difficult to find an example such as the Song bowl, probably Zhejiang celadon ware of about the thirteenth century, recently reported from Pendua in northwest Lombok. This example is also interesting because there is Indianized evidence from the site in the form of some bronze items and a structural base.[25] In South Sulawesi, which seems to have been totally unknown to the Chinese before the seventeenth century, 10 per cent of a very large sample of ceramics dates from the Song period or, roughly, before 1300 AD.[26] The indirect nature of this contact with South Sulawesi is confirmed, at a slightly later period, by the mix of Thai and Vietnamese wares also found there.

Like the elements of Indian influence, the ceramics have been passed on into the fringe area by others, their functions have been 'localized' by the societies receiving them[27] and it is wise to maintain a highly sceptical attitude on matters of dating. Also, for a later period at least, one can see the final extension of these influences to the remote shores of Irian and north Australia.

As we have noted above, this concept of a fringe area has the effect of marking a boundary, albeit a rather fuzzy one. This boundary, though, must include some areas, at least, not given much prominence in accounts which are concerned primarily to describe major foci of foreign influence such as those in Java, Cambodia or Tonkin.

The major difficulty, however, is the question of how useful it is to think of the eastern parts of the archipelago in this period of the ninth to fourteenth centuries as a fringe area. It is no denial of the immensely productive power of the external elements to stress the continuing dynamism of local societies. A detailed narrative is far beyond the potential of the available evidence, but the following sketch of some features of the time and place, together with a re-evaluation of the material just described, can give some idea of the proper balance between external and local factors. Indeed, there are enough local factors shared between societies in this area or significant types of interaction between these societies for us to conceive of the area as having some historical unity at this time.

A useful point to begin with is literacy. Until the arrival of Islam with the Arab script and, much later, the Europeans with their Latin script, all writing systems in the archipelago were based on the Indian system of **akṣara**. To begin with, many of the inscriptions in the western part of the archipelago, as on the mainland, were written in Sanskrit and there is no question of systematic change in the basis of the writing system. In due course, inevitable palaeographical changes and adaptations to the needs of, say, Javanese produced the successive variations of Javanese script.[28] However, the extent of change and adaptation is very much greater outside Java, Bali and the Straits of Malacca area. In parts of Sumatra and, more importantly, in South Sulawesi, the Philippines and perhaps also in Sumbawa, there are scripts very different from any Indian or even Javanese models. Given the lack of early, dated examples of these scripts, it is probably impossible to determine their precise relationships, at least on the basis of the **akṣara** shapes.

The scripts of this type about which we are best informed are those in Sulawesi. Although much more research remains to be done, we can be confident that scripts of this general type were in use around 1500 and, probably, several centuries earlier. One purpose, at least, for which writing was used seems to have been genealogical records, in order to maintain a record of ascriptive status which, as we have noted above, is of prime importance in the societies of this area. Whether or not this use of writing was strictly original, its elaboration, especially in the form of chronicles, is very striking. Two other innovations are noteworthy. The Sulawesi scripts dispense almost entirely with any device for indicating the final consonant of a syllable. This is slightly inconvenient (and infinitely frustrating for non-native speakers) but because of the phonology of Macassar and Bugis, not impossible. Secondly, there is the format of writing, which seems to have been quite unlike anything in Java or Sumatra. The only specimens of Sulawesi scripts not on paper or other modern materials are several examples of narrow palm-leaf strips, sewn together to make a very long ribbon which is then wound around two wooden spools. The general effect is something like the mechanism for a typewriter ribbon or a cassette tape. The reader reads a single line of script, engraved into the palm-leaf surface and stained black, by turning the two spools. Among the very precious collection of such material in the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam, is a piece illustrating how such strips were held at each end and engraved against a hard board.[29] While all extant examples are modern, the lack of any alternative and the terminology used in works now found only in conventional manuscript form suggest that these strip rolls were the pre-modern format for Sulawesi writing.

The antiquity of literacy east of the area in which inscriptions occur is extremely problematical. However, three pieces of evidence suggest that we should not be dismissive of guesses beyond what can be firmly demonstrated. The first is the existence of the Kutai inscriptions in eastern Kalimantan, well away from other comparable evidence. On palaeographical grounds, these inscriptions seem to date to around 400 AD.[30] Whatever the nature and date of the Kutai remains, which seem still far from clear, the very fact of the presence of inscriptions there argues for some form of literacy at, presumably, a date in the first millennium AD at least. Secondly, there is the account in the well-known *Zhu-Fan-Zhi* of Zhao Rukuo written about 1225, but referring to an embassy from Brunei to the Chinese court at the end of the first millennium:

The official document they submitted to the Throne was covered by a number of wrappers, the paper was like tree-bark, but thin, smooth and glossy, and of a greenish tint, several feet long and over an inch in thickness [?width]; when rolled up, it was just as much as one could hold in the hand. The characters written upon it were fine and small; and were to be read horizontally.

(Then follows a summary of the contents of the letter.)[31]

It is intriguing, if nothing more, that this description of the format of writing sounds very like the Sulawesi strip rolls. Finally, there is the argument that the writing systems found by the Spanish in the Philippines in the sixteenth century can most plausibly be derived from



the Sulawesi systems on the grounds of the lack of indication of final consonants. This is highly inconvenient in the Philippine languages. Some time must be allowed before the Spanish arrival to account for the transmission of the scripts and the high level of literacy observed at that period. What this adds up to is that, as de Casparis remarks, writing may have been 'in much more general use in ancient maritime South East Asia than is generally thought'.[32]

What is most significant for the purpose of this paper is to note the independence with which the concept of literacy was developed in this area. Much more is involved than just the reception of an Indian model.

A feature of the early history of island Southeast Asia which has been much discussed is maritime trade. Some of this merely passed through Southeast Asian entrepôts, but other items had to be brought in to these entrepôts from within the archipelago (and imports distributed outwards). Yet other items were exchanged within the limits of the archipelago itself. It is this trade within the archipelago, whether involving long distance trading entrepôts or not, that is of concern here.

As noted above, the prehistoric Austronesian speakers of the archipelago were competent seafarers and there is ample evidence of continuing contact between islands. Scott has recently reviewed the question of boats and seamanship in classic Philippine society.[33] Although much of this information comes from Spanish sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most of his picture can be read back earlier, as confirmed by the recent excavation of several vessels from the period with which we are concerned. If raiding Visayans with their swift caracoas were on the Fukien coast in the twelfth century,[34] they could certainly travel south and east as well.

In the next century, Zhao Rukuo gives a very clear picture of Chinese traders to Mindoro surrendering their goods on credit to local traders who acted as distributors and collectors.[35] But the pattern of trade was not always so simple. The widespread distribution of Tanjong Kubor earthenware, which seems to have been made at a number of locations in northern Borneo in Song times, is a case in point. It is found not only in Borneo, but across the South China Sea in Hong Kong and probably in the Philippines and the western parts of the archipelago.[36] The iron smelting activity along the north Borneo coast, now probably to be dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,[37] demonstrates the impressive scale of activity that could be involved.

Further south in the archipelago, specific evidence of trade is hard to find, but the general evidence of Chinese ceramics is everywhere abundant. Something must have been traded in return. A few clues exist as to what these goods might have been. The early importance of Luwu at the head of the Gulf of Bone is attested by a mention in the *Nāgarakērtāgama* and by the local historiography. This is most easily explained by its access to sources of gold and especially nickel and iron for the making of fine weapons. It is difficult to reconstruct the detail of the trade that brought spices and other similar products from the Moluccas and Lesser Sundas to western Indonesia, but there is no reason to exclude the enterprise of people in the producing regions from this trade. A salutary reminder of the degree of mobility is Pigafetta's 1521 encounter with a junk from

Luzon trading for sandalwood on the north coast of Timor. The stress on gold and wax, as well as sandalwood, in the same account is also noteworthy.[38]

Much of this local trade ultimately depended on the demand in India and China, but the local response to that demand did not involve the localization of any new cultural trait. The long prehistoric contact and intra-archipelago trade demonstrate that. The phenomenon of trade, especially when it is complex, maritime and multi-staged, often produces problems of boundary definition. One might argue whether the trade patterns in the eastern part of the archipelago at this time are better regarded as linking the area with distant centres or represent a further expression of local interaction.

A final feature of the eastern parts of the archipelago which deserves consideration, at least at the end of our period, is political change. Much of this must remain impenetrably obscure. For example, when Galvão in the early sixteenth century was trying to discover the early history of the Moluccas, he could get no real information on political developments before the middle of the previous century.[39] Other changes, such as the establishment of the Belu people in central Timor, seem to be undatable, even if one can accept the general picture of events implied by tradition.[40] In the Philippines before the sixteenth century, a speculative hypothesis, based primarily on archaeological evidence, has been proposed, linking external trade with changes in settlement patterns, the internal economic system and social structure.[41] However, the suggested political developments are still basically anonymous: no doubt the place names were the same as those of later periods, but the Chinese records do not tell us much about individuals.

Yet the task is not totally impossible everywhere. In the history of South Sulawesi a case can be made for a transfer of political power around 1400 from states based primarily on trade to new states relying on agricultural surplus.[42] The evidence is derived from the indigenous historiography of the area. It is very important to note that this account is based on observation rather than hypothesis, and thus does not rely on the credibility of any explanation. That is a separate question.

This is also a convenient case with which to conclude because it meets so directly one of the points in Benda's famous article about the shape of Southeast Asian history. Benda argues that we can know little about the Southeast Asian 'infrastructure', that is, the non-Indianized base. In particular, 'one of the most poignant and important stages in the growth of early Southeast Asian civilizations, that of the moving frontier between shifting and sedentary agriculture, will thus have to remain unwritten'.[43] That is precisely the change that we can describe in South Sulawesi. More generally, the theme of this paper is that we now can know something of the shape and development of that infrastructure. This knowledge has come to us through much more than looking at 'localization' and distinguishing foreign elements from 'local genius'.

## NOTES

1. Peter Bellwood, **Man's Conquest of the Pacific**, Auckland: Collins, 1978. The account here is, of course, extremely simplified.
2. Dr J.J. Fox pers. comm.
3. I am grateful to Dr W.A. Foley for advice on this point. I also pass over much other important linguistic evidence such as the possible links between Chamic and Sumatran languages.
4. J.J. Fox (ed.), **The Flow of Life: essays on eastern Indonesia**, Harvard University Press, 1980, p.10.
5. For discussion of some of these factors in both Austronesian and non-Austronesian speaking societies with basically bilateral kinship, see D. Miles, "Land, Labour and Kin Groups among Southeast Asian shifting cultivators", **Mankind**, vol.8 (1972), pp.185-97.
6. Ann Kumar, "Javanese Court Society and Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century: the record of a lady soldier", Part I, **Indonesia**, No.29 (1980), pp.1-46; Part II, **Indonesia**, No.30 (1980), pp.67-111.
7. S.B. Millar, "On interpreting gender in Bugis society", **American Ethnologist**, vol.3, No.10 (1983), pp.477-93.
8. J.A. Boon, **The Anthropological Romance of Bali 1597-1972**, Cambridge University Press, 1977.
9. See most conveniently, F.H. van Naerssen and R.C. de Jongh, **The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia** (Handbuch der Orientalistik 3/7), Leiden: Brill, 1977, pp.36-46.
10. In Fox, **Flow**, p.135 and p.149.
11. Bellwood, **Conquest**, p.173.
12. J. Gonda, **Sanskrit in Indonesia**, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1973.
13. P.J. Zoetmulder, **Old Javanese-English Dictionary**, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982, p.1445.
14. T.G.T. Pigeaud, **Java in the 14th century**, vol.3, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960, p.14 (Nāg. 12.1) and p.24 (Nāg. 18.4).
15. After B.F. Matthes, **Makassaarsch-Hollandsch Woordenboek**, Amsterdam: Muller, 1859, p.96.
16. C.C. Macknight, **The Voyage to Marege'**, Melbourne University Press, 1976, p.90.
17. R.F. Ellen, "The Centre on the Periphery: Moluccan culture in an Indonesian State", **Indonesia Circle**, No.31 (1983), pp.3-6.
18. The translation is from a forthcoming edition of the chronicle by Dr Mukhlis and myself.
19. A.L. Basham, **The Wonder that was India**, London: Fontana, 1971, p.87.

20. See, for example, D.W. Horst, *De Rum-serams op Nieuw-Guinea of het Hinduïsme in het oosten van onzen Archipel*, Leiden: Brill, 1893.
21. O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, Cornell University Press, 1967, map 3.
22. P. Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade", *JMBRAS*, vol.32, part 2 (1959), pp.1-140.
23. O.W. Wolters, "A Few and Miscellaneous Pi-chi Jottings on early Indonesia", *Indonesia*, vol.36 (1983), pp.58-9. A useful account of the sources for the Philippines is available in W.H. Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, University of Santo Tomas Press, 1968. (A new edition is in preparation.)
24. The most obvious source, towards the end of our period, is J.V.G. Mills (ed.), *Ma Huan: Ying-yai Sheng-lan 'The overall survey of the ocean's shores'*, Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1970.
25. Ahmad Cholid Sodrie, *Laporan Hasil Survei Kepurbakalaan di Daerah Nusa Tenggara Barat* (Berita Penelitian Arkeologi No.12), Jakarta: Proyek Pengembangan Media Kebudayaan, Departemen P & K, 1977, p.5 and foto 4.
26. Hadimuljono and C.C. Macknight, "Imported Ceramics in South Sulawesi", *RIMA*, vol.17 (1983), p.77.
27. As Hadimuljono and Macknight ("Ceramics", p.81) explain, the use of functional ceramics as grave goods involves a change of function. The same also applies to some of the other uses of ceramics they discuss.
28. J.G. de Casparis, *Indonesian Palaeography* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 3/4i), Leiden: Brill, 1975.
29. Item A 4517 (= N.A.M. series 1/1349). It dates before 1887. The most complete example of a strip roll in this collection is series 668/Item 215.
30. De Casparis, *Palaeography*, p.18.
31. F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: his work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911, p.157.
32. De Casparis, *Palaeography*, p.73.
33. W.H. Scott, "Boat-building and seamanship in classic Philippine society", *Philippine Studies*, vol.30 (1982), pp.335-76.
34. *Ibid.*, p.366.
35. Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, p.160. See also on this form of trade, C.C. Macknight, "The Rise of Agriculture in South Sulawesi before 1600", *RIMA*, vol.17 (1983), pp.94-7.
36. P. Bellwood and Matussin bin Omar, "Trade patterns and political developments in Brunei and adjacent areas AD 700-1500", *Brunei Museum Journal*, vol.4, No.4 (1980), pp.155-79.
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42. Macknight, "Rise of Agriculture".
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## Political and Cultural Continuities at Dvaravati Sites

Srisakra Vallibhotama

### Introduction

It is widely accepted among scholars in Southeast Asian studies that Central Thailand from the sixth to the eleventh century A.D. was dominated by a single state known as Dvaravati with its capital city at Nakhon Pathom (Quaritch Wales, 1965 and Diskul, 1972: 4,5). Most of its population were Mons who embraced Buddhism as their principal religion. With the rise of Angkor from the tenth century, Dvaravati gradually declined and in the end was replaced by Lop Buri or Lavo, which was established by Khmer overlordship in Cambodia.

This reconstruction of Dvaravati history is based mainly on accounts of a state called To-lo-po-ti, mentioned in Chinese notes. This name can be restored as Dvaravati, which appears on an old coin of the seventh century and in the Ayuthya chronicle, where the name of the city is mentioned in full "... krung thep **dvaravati** sri ayuthya ...". Moreover, the existence of this early state is supported by the presence of religious monuments and art objects heavily influenced by the Post Gupta and Pala arts of India from the sixth to the ninth century. The similarity in art style in the archaeological evidence has led to what is known as the Dvaravati style. It is found all over the Chao Phraya Valley, and indicates a shared pattern of culture among cities, towns, and villages which were integrated into a state.

This paper argues that when one looks at Dvaravati from the perspective of the development and distribution of ancient settlements in the Chao Phraya Valley, the cultural similarity reflected in art style becomes obscure and does not clearly explain political organization and continuity of the state in this region. Instead, there are some differences that indicate that more than one political centre and state existed in Central Thailand.

### Development and distribution of ancient settlements in the Chao Phraya Valley

The Chao Phraya Valley is the deltaic region formed by deposition of sediment from various river systems. From existing archaeological evidence, it is the oldest area of Central Thailand where sedentary human settlements developed and later became state and nation. Its

geography and environment played an important role in providing a firm basis for such a development. In the first place, the entire area encompasses a large fertile lowland suitable for rice cultivation that can feed large numbers of people. Secondly, the area is located near the Gulf of Siam and is therefore open to economic and cultural contact with foreign countries by sea. These conditions attracted people of various origins both from the hinterland and overseas to settle down and interact with one another socially and culturally.

My survey and study of the distribution of ancient settlements in this region reveal that people from surrounding regions moved down to settle along various river basins of the deltaic area during the late metal period (Vallibhotama, 1982), i.e., about 500 B.C. which was the time when overseas contact with other regions becomes evident. The presence of Dongson materials in many places confirms this development (Suchitta, 1983: 131-134). Human settlements found at the fringe of the uplands and along the river banks in the floodplain are associated with metal work of advanced technology and ornaments made of precious stones such as jade, amethyst, carnelian, and agate, some of which were imported. Settlements in the same river basin practised the same burial tradition and had similar types of grave furniture. However, in each burial ground which was shared by members of the community, there was a difference in individual wealth discernable from treasure associated with the dead. This reflects a degree of social stratification beyond the level of egalitarian village society. Further, there were cultural differences among settlements of different river basins. For example, human remains in the upper Chao Phraya Valley were found with chains of spindle whorls around their waists.

At the beginning of the Christian era more settlements developed and were scattered along various river basins in the west, the north, and the east of the delta. This is indicated by increasing numbers of burial mounds which were shared by the surrounding communities. Foreign cultural elements were found mixing with local materials and the localized monuments and objects. The former included such items as cult objects, coins, beads, earrings, combs and seals bearing symbolic designs. The latter were made locally but incorporated certain traits of foreign elements such as Indian styled lamps and pottery, images of the Buddha and deities, coins and seals with symbolic designs derived from Indian origins, and fragments of terracotta or stucco decorations used to adorn religious structures which have now vanished.

As far as my study is concerned, two localities are likely to have been the chief ports of contact with foreign countries, and centres of distribution of foreign materials to other settlements within and without the deltaic regions. One is at U Thong in the Tha Chin River basin in the west, and the other is Sri Mahosod in the Bang Pakong basin in the east.[1] Apart from foreign cultural materials indicating long distance trade with other countries overseas, both sites possess other kinds of urban traits: namely, a number of religious buildings, roads and irrigation networks, and fortifications and satellite communities within a radius of 5-10 kms from the centre, indicating the presence of a substantial population. Most of the findings at U Thong and Sri Mahosod are similar and rather contemporary with those remaining in Oc Eo in Vietnam and Beikthano in Burma from the second to the sixth century. It is possible that both of them were centres of the earliest



states that ever developed in Central Thailand.

From the sixth century, moated settlements with an irregularly oriented plan developed in many localities of the region. Some were built on top of earlier settlements and others were newly located. Large and small religious buildings belonging to the so-called Dvaravati art style are found associated with them. In addition to the two former sites at U Thong and Sri Mahosod, there are another four large moated settlements in the major river basins: namely, Nakhon Chaisri (ancient Nakhon Pathom) in the lower Tha Chin (Vallibhotama, 1966: 118-130), Kubua in the Mae Klong, Lavo or Lop Buri on the eastern bank of the Lop Buri River, and Sri Thep in the upper Pasak Valley. Only the first three sites were accessible to the sea through large waterways connected with the Gulf of Thailand. The last one was probably the inland junction on account of its location on the overland route connecting the Central Plain with the Korat Plateau in the Northeast.[2]

Of these six urban centres, there is a difference in cultural composition despite their similarity in art form and style. In the first place, U Thong and other lesser settlements in the Tha Chin basin are associated with Buddhist monuments and objects, while Sri Mahosod and others on the eastern basins are associated with Hinduism. For the latter, evidence can be seen in the remains of sanctuaries housing images of Vishnu and Kanapati in and around the settlement. Nakhon Chaisri and Kubua are the same as U Thong in that they are closely related to Buddhism but developed later to become centres of classical Dvaravati art. Larger monuments and images of the Buddha and deities have been discovered in great numbers. Lavo, in the middle part of the Chao Phraya Valley, seemed to embrace Buddhism as Nakhon Chaisri and Kubua did but developed another art style and form of religious monuments and objects different from the typical Dvaravati style of the west. In contrast, they possess certain artistic features found in the Buddhist art of Haripunjaya of Northern Thailand and in the early Khmer art in Angkor. Like Sri Mahosod, Sri Thep in the Pasak Valley was strongly influenced by Hinduism as numerous Hindu gods, large and small, have been discovered. Further, its city plan is completely different from the others as it has twin and outer sections. The inner is round while the outer is an extension of the moated area to the east. With the existence of larger religious monuments in its compound, the inner section is no doubt the more important area of the settlement. Such city planning is similar to that of several moated settlements in the Northeast such as Muang Sema in Nakhon Ratchasima, Muang Am in Khon Kaen, Ban Tad Thong in Yasothorn, etc. In the Chao Phraya Valley, Dvaravati settlements to the north (such as Muang Bon, Dong Mae Nang Muang and Thap Chumphon in Nakhon Sawan and Bung Kok Chang in U Thai Thani), have plans similar to Sri Thep. This similarity in planning reflects some cultural connections between certain Dvaravati settlements in the Central Plain and those of the Northeast. In terms of other cultural evidence, the connections are confirmed by the presence of *sema* stones erected around mounds of religious sites in Dong Mae Nang Muang. This practice was popular in the sacred sites of the Northeast.

The end of the eighth century saw another step in cultural change among Dvaravati settlements in Central Thailand (Boisselier, 1975: 20). Perhaps contact with Srivijaya and Bengal brought in the influence of Mahayana Buddhism, and this resulted in the construction of new

religious buildings and the distribution of Mahayana Buddhas and deities all over the region. It is likely that this period witnessed close economic and cultural relations among various settlements within the delta. The same relationship also extended to the Northeast, particularly with settlements in the Chi River basin. At the same time more moated settlements were established in the upper part of the deltaic region. This indicates an increasing population in the area.

About the early eleventh century Khmer religious influence made itself felt in Sri Thep. Khmer sanctuaries of the Papuan period were established in the inner section of the settlement. Lavo or Lop Buri was the next to absorb Khmer cultural influence. The erection of Prang Khaek, a Khmer **prasat**, at the heart of the city and the discovery of an inscription stone mentioning the name of King Suriyavarman I tell something about socio-political relations with Angkor. However, Khmer religious and artistic influences did not continue to be disseminated from Lop Buri. An inscription of the twelfth century found *in situ* at Dong Mae Nang Muang, Makhon Sawan, a Dvaravati settlement, mentions a king named Sri Dhammasokaraj who was not the Cambodian king at Angkor. This indicates the independence of this locality from Khmer hegemony.

From the thirteenth century, Mahayana Buddhism from Cambodia spread all over the region. This is obvious from remains of Khmer-style buildings and Khmer statues of the Buddha and deities imported from Angkor. Lop Buri became the centre for the production and distribution of localized Khmer sacred objects and images. As a result, the Lop Buri art style became popular and is found both within and without the deltaic region. Simultaneous with the spread of Mahayana Buddhism was the development of new moated settlements with a regularly oriented plan. They are found near the river banks and on the land routes linking various localities of the region. Those settlements near the rivers which arose to replace Dvaravati settlements are associated with old waterways. Ayodhya on the Chao Phraya River, Suphanabhum on the Tha Chin River, Ratburi on the Mae Klong River and Petchburi on the Petchburi River are large and important examples. They had access to the sea in the same manner as their precursors U Thong, Nakhon Chaisri, Sri Mahosod and Kubua. With their navigable rivers and waterways, these settlements continued in importance as the principal cities in the delta until the Ayuthya and Bangkok periods. On the other hand, settlements located near the land routes were smaller in size and short-lived. All of them are associated with Khmer-style monuments and sacred objects of Mahayana Buddhism. As most of them occupied virgin areas, they were likely to be established in the same manner as the Khmer settlements which were mentioned in the inscriptions; land was bought or claimed by the king or bureaucrats to donate to the gods and deities. Religious monuments were built to house the sacred images, sacred ponds and reservoirs were dug, and a number of slaves and draft animals were provided to look after the sanctuaries. The religious sites became the centre of the community sites around which people were allowed to settle, and moats and walls were built later to give protection from raids and invasions. However, in the Chao Phraya Valley, the establishment of such communities or temple towns in the upland areas could not attract people for long. They might be forced to settle down for a period of time but when the authority declined they moved away to live in the riverine areas. This is evident from the

fact that most such settlements were left unfinished and with no occupation layers or evidence of life to suggest a long occupation.

As far as my survey is concerned most settlements associated with Mahayana Buddhist temples and which are located near the land routes are found from the east to the west of the delta. They are Prasat Nang Phom Hom in Amphur Chaibadan, Lop Buri, Ban Dilang, Saraburi, Noen Thang Phra, Amphur Sam Chuk, Ban Rai Rod, Amphur Don Chedi, Suphan Buri, Muang Kosinarai, Amphur Ban Pong and Prasat Muang Sing, Karnchanaburi. Many scholars attribute the establishment of these temple towns to King Jayavarman VII of Angkor because the art style of the religious monuments and objects display a Bayon influence and they tally with the inscription of Prasat Phra Khan in Cambodia (Sukhsawadi, 1983: 90-101). Whether these settlements were culturally and politically connected with Jayavarman VII is not a matter to be discussed here. One point, however, is that no two religious structures of these settlements are alike. This situation is completely different from that found in the Northeast where the pattern is obvious. Further, in the temple towns of the Chao Phraya Valley, no Khmer lintels and decorations are found, but there are some imitations in stucco. At the same time, the Dvaravati art style and motif continued to be used in the decoration of buildings, alongside those imitated from the Khmer.

However, apart from the development of new settlements already mentioned, many Dvaravati sites continued until the fifteenth century in the early Ayuthya period. What enabled them to persist was, no doubt, their waterways which still functioned for communication and transportation. These settlements were, for example, the cities of Lavo or Lop Buri, Indraburi and Sing Buri.

### **Difference vs similarity**

Based on this description of the development and distribution of ancient settlements in the Chao Phraya Valley, I would, for several reasons, contest the former supposition that viewed Central Thailand as being dominated by a single state - Dvaravati with its centre at Nakhon Pathom:

1. Earlier studies had overemphasized similarity on the basis of the form of the cultural materials rather than their content. That is, the similarity of art, based on style, is viewed as Dvaravati style, and the period from its beginning in the sixth century to its decline in the eleventh century is called the Dvaravati period. This leads to explanations of the socio-political aspects of the people who inhabited Central Thailand which is supposed to be the location of the state of Dvaravati according to the documentary evidence. All locations having Dvaravati monuments and art objects are regarded as part of the kingdom. Among various Dvaravati sites, Nakhon Pathom has larger monuments and objects of classical workmanship, so it has been regarded as being both a cultural and political centre of the state.

On the contrary, my study has shown that, despite similarity in art style among various places in the Chao Phraya Valley, there are differences among them in terms of content and meaning. Those monuments and art objects are religious in their content. They

reflect two different religious systems, Buddhism and Hinduism. Ancient settlements in the western half of the Chao Phraya Valley emphasized Buddhism as their main religious concern, while those in the eastern half embraced Hinduism as the principal religion. Such a difference in belief systems implies a difference in political entity.

2. In searching for other data, earlier studies concentrated on religious monuments and art objects but paid little interest to the local settlements to which the evidence belongs. In this way they neglected to observe the distribution of ancient communities and the ways in which they developed and were related to each other economically and culturally. Therefore, these studies lacked a political perspective for understanding the development of human communities from village to town, city and state. My study reveals that the Chao Phraya Valley was geographically not well integrated but was divided into many river basins before the present river systems came into being. Settlements of different levels (i.e., from villages to towns and cities) were closely connected or integrated with each other socially and culturally in each river basin. In some basins like that of the Tha Chin, more settlements are found than in the others and these possess similar cultural evidence such as burial grounds, Buddhist monuments, and various kinds of artifacts. Such a similarity reflects a kind of socio-economic network among them. At this point a grouping of settlements into a separate political entity from those in the other basins is discernable to a certain degree. At the same time the levels of settlements into village, town and city lend themselves to hierarchical arrangement. The most important site of the basin was the political and cultural centre of the state. The size and scope of each state depended on its ability to incorporate settlements in the lesser river basins with its own. Large cities like U Thong, Sri Mahosod and Nakhon Chaisri had a cultural network far beyond their own river basins and influenced other regions outside the Chao Phraya Valley. This was the physical structure of the state in the riverine region and when one considers the difference in religious belief among various groups of settlements, one can suggest that at least at the beginning of the Christian era two contemporary states existed in the Chao Phraya Valley: U Thong in the west, embracing Buddhism, and Sri Mahosod in the east espousing Hinduism.
3. Once I had delineated the physical structure of the state in the Chao Phraya Valley by studying cultural differences among groups of settlements in different river basins, I provided myself with a special political perspective that was bound to identify and date political and cultural change among cities and states in this region. In the Tha Chin River basin, the city of Nakhon Chaisri appeared to replace U Thong from the seventh century. More cities and towns connected with this centre developed in the nearby river basins such as Kubua in the Mae Klong River and many others upstream in Sing Buri and Chainat. On the eastern part of another valley, Lavo or Lop Buri replaced Sri Mahosod and extended its cultural and political relations eastward to Sri Thep in the Pasak Valley and probably into the Northeast as well.[3] From the end of

the eighth century, Mahayana Buddhism spread into the region and brought various centres and states into close contact with each other. At the same time more settlements developed in the upper part of the valley and some of them were culturally related to the Northeast. The eleventh century A.D. saw the influence of Khmer Hinduism at Sri Thep and Lavo, and the latter became particularly closely connected politically with Angkor in Cambodia. Khmer inscriptions, art objects and pottery were found in many places.

During the thirteenth century new cities and towns with a regularly oriented plan developed near the waterways and land routes. Many of these settlements were associated with large Buddhist structures and sacred objects belonging to the Mahayana school of Cambodia. This marks a great socio-political change within the region. Among large Dvaravati settlements, Lavo or Lop Buri was the sole centre that continued in importance. It became the cultural centre for the dissemination of Mahayana Buddhism and the Khmer-like art style known as the Lop Buri school to various places within and without the deltaic region. That the city of Lop Buri still continued to exist is no doubt due to its location near the Lop Buri River which promoted communication. Other Dvaravati cities, namely Nakhon Chaisri and Kubua, were doomed to decay and were replaced by Suphanabhum and Ratburi which developed on the present Suphanburi River and the Mae Klong River.

Simultaneously, Ayodhya and Petchburi emerged as port cities in the Chao Phraya and Petchburi River basins respectively. Most of these riverine cities and towns flourished and continued in importance until the Ayuthya period, while the temple towns located on the land routes seemed to die out before the rise of Ayuthya. However, the presence of these temple towns reflects another level of economic and political expansion in Central Thailand. The development of trade routes was not only cutting across the upland areas of the delta from east to west but also extended into the neighbouring hinterland. The existence of Khmer-like temples in Sukhothai and Sri Satchanalai in the north of the Chao Phraya Valley also indicates the presence of temple towns related to certain states in Central Thailand before the state of Sukhothai developed some time in that century.

4. Earlier studies which suggested that Central Thailand's early political centre was at Nakhon Pathom and later at Lop Buri are entirely inaccurate. It is not likely that centralized states such as Nakhon Pathom and Lop Buri emerged before independent city states such as Petchburi, Ayodhya and Suphanabhum, the existence of which was recorded in various pieces of documentary evidence. On the contrary, the division of the Chao Phraya Valley into at least two states from the early historical time is consistent with the fact that later in the thirteenth century the delta was occupied by at least two rival states, Lavo and Syam which are mentioned in the inscription at Angkor Wat, or Lohu and Siem in the Chinese notes. It is with the rise of the centralized state of Ayuthya that such a division came to an end.

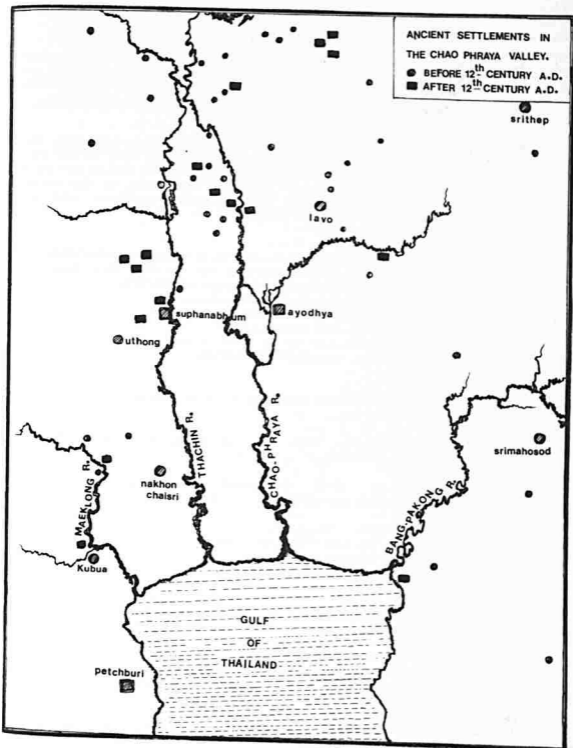
### Conclusion

The scarcity of local documents has led scholars to use external sources such as foreign notes and artifacts to reconstruct the early history of Thailand by reconciling them with the art style of prevalent religious monuments and objects in a given area. The former, although giving interesting accounts of social, cultural and political aspects of the society they mention, are difficult to evaluate in terms of the local world view and are especially so when one seeks to identify these place names in terms of present-day geography. Art style is useful only in delineating the cultural area and the datable period of their persistence. The early history of Central Thailand is a case in point. It was assumed that before the twelfth century A.D. the region was dominated by a kingdom called Dvaravati with its political centre at Nakhon Pathom.

In recent times various pieces of internal evidence have been discovered and are used here to review what had been proposed in the past. The study and survey of the remains of ancient settlements and their distribution within the deltaic region of Central Thailand confront the former thesis with the fact that ancient settlements of different levels from village to town and city were not integrated into a single state called Dvaravati. They were grouped together in their own river basins with large cities as their centre. In terms of political entity in the context of differences in religious systems in the Chao Phraya Valley, at least two rival states were prevalent from early times until the fifteenth century, when the entire region was united under the kingdom of Ayuthya.

ANCIENT SETTLEMENTS IN  
THE CHAO PHRAYA VALLEY.

- BEFORE 12<sup>th</sup> CENTURY A.D.  
■ AFTER 12<sup>th</sup> CENTURY A.D.



## NOTES

1. The distance between the Tha Chin River Basin and that of the Bang Pakong was great as the two were then separated by swamps and floodplains in what are now the provinces of Ang Thong, Pathum Thani, Non Buri and Chachoengsao and Bangkok.
2. From the early metal period until the proto-historical time sedentary human settlements were concentrated only in the Chao Phraya Valley of Central Thailand and the Sakon Nakhon and Korat Basins of the Northeast. Thus the orientation of the coastal areas and the hinterland was southwest-northeast and not south-north as in the later periods.
3. Geographically speaking Lavo was in a better position than Sri Mahosod as it could contact with both the Tha Chin River Basin and the hinterland in the Northeast (Saraya, 1982: 22).

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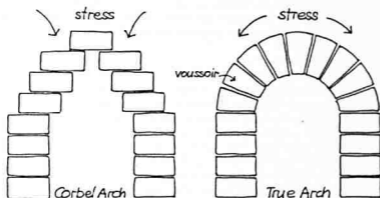
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## The True and the Corbel Arch in Mainland Southeast Asian Monumental Architecture

Helmut Loofs-Wissowa

### Introduction

In this paper two contrasting architectural features will be compared as they occur in the contemporaneous kingdoms of predominantly Hinduist Cambodia and Buddhist Burma; the former used the Corbel Arch exclusively, whereas the latter made extensive use of the True Arch - the only country in Southeast Asia to do so. Another aspect of this difference is in the building material employed: stone in Angkor versus brick in Pagan.



The corbelling method is formed by oversailing courses of brick or stone until a final, sometimes T-shaped piece achieves the junction. Stress is thus transmitted vertically from above towards the weakest part of the arch, the centre, causing bricks or stones to collapse in this direction unless held in place by surrounding masonry work. Obviously, this is a very ineffective method of bridging voids for anything but the narrowest spaces.

In the True, or "radiating", Arch wedge-shaped stones (*voussoirs*) are laid in a semi-circle resting on columns or built-up supports. Stress, in this case, is transmitted sideways and it is there that breakage may occur. This arch also appears in many other forms: pointed, ogival, segmental, etc. (Fletcher (1975: 1310) enumerates more than thirty different forms of this arch!) Whatever its form,

however, if correctly constructed, the True Arch may last for thousands of years. In some ruined Roman monuments it is indeed the arches which are still standing, while the walls themselves have long collapsed.

Whereas there is no difference between the technology of brick or stone corbelling, there is one in the case of the True Arch which can be "dry" if the *vousoirs* are wedged into position by their own weight and shape, but needs mortar as a binding agent if rectangular bricks are used.

When contrasting the two methods at least three approaches should be used, namely the architectural-functional, the artistic and the politico-religious ones. With regard to the first, it is evident that, properly supported, the True Arch is longer lasting than the Corbel one, in particular when bridging a wide opening. If only a small space has to be bridged, the Corbel Arch, especially if finished by a T-shaped keystone, may be just as solid and lasting.

The second approach looks at the role that taste or local traditions may play in the adoption of architectural forms. Finally, the politico-religious approach assesses the needs of space as determined by religious or ritual considerations and such matters as organization of labour and the like; in this respect it is obvious that the construction of a large True Arch necessitates a far greater amount of managerial skill and foresight, in the sense that much work has to be put into the building of such an arch before it is seen to work, than in the case of the Corbel Arch, which, so to speak, builds itself. The fact that the True Arch normally needs the support of scaffolding before its completion also means that material for this purpose had to be found, which in some areas, such as ancient Mesopotamia, posed real problems (Oates 1973:185), although in most parts of Southeast Asia wood or bamboo must always have been readily available.

### Questions to be asked

Given the above, two main questions need to be asked. The first, and to a 20th century observer rather obvious one, is why the kings of the mighty Angkorian empire, whose overwhelming concern when building was to create monuments which would last forever - as they were also mausoleums - did not use the structurally sounder True Arch?

And second: why did the Pyus and Burmans adopt it, though it was never transmitted to other parts of Southeast Asia, not even to kingdoms like Sukhothai and Ayutthaya with an almost identical religious orientation and very similar cultural traditions? To this can be added questions regarding the history of the True Arch in adjacent parts of Asia, i.e. India and China, which influenced the geographical area of what is now Burma as well as other areas of Southeast Asia.

### Review of the evidence

Early Southeast Asia had no tradition of brick or stone architecture. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the fact that monuments even in classical Angkorian times are "translations" into stone of wooden buildings (e.g. Banteay Srei or indeed Angkor Wat itself; see also Malleret 1959:355 seq.) and they often included wooden beams or posts in their construction - a fact which was greatly lamented by the last conservator of Angkor, Bernard Philippe Groslier, because it made

restoration work so much more difficult (Groslier: pers. comm.). In other words, even in the 13th century, after more than six centuries of working with brick or stone, Southeast Asian architects had not fully assimilated masonry techniques and were still "thinking wood". Obviously, this amazing tenacity of traditions, well attested by many observations in Southeast Asian archaeology, where not only elements of material culture, but also beliefs, rituals etc. can sometimes be traced back to several millennia, must be seen as a major obstacle to the acceptance of new forms, methods and techniques. In the field of architecture this is again demonstrated: only what was considered to be necessary or desirable was accepted - not because it was functionally superior or more efficient.

What reliefs on monuments also confirm is that they were all religious buildings; as Coedès puts it so poetically, "The gods alone had the right to live in houses of stone or brick, the only materials other than bronze that could resist the climate and the passage of time. The sovereigns themselves lived in pavilions of wood" (Coedès 1963:7). Thus there was a clear distinction in Southeast Asian architecture between religious architecture in stone or brick, and, with the exception of some bridges, a laic one in perishable material. Two conclusions may be drawn from this observation, namely (a) that the idea of building in stone or brick was linked with an organized religion; and (b) that this religion (or these religions), together with this idea, must have been introduced into Southeast Asia from outside the region - obviously from India, where both Hinduism and Buddhism originated. As is well known, India itself received this idea from the west, when Aśoka employed Greek and Persian craftsmen from Bactria.

However, the distinction between the two religions does not help us here, as many of the cosmological concepts which determine monumental architecture in Southeast Asia are common to both, notably the "cosmo-magic principle". It is this belief in the parallelism between macrocosmos and microcosmos, and the need to bring them into harmony, which is the basis of most, if not all, ancient Southeast Asian monumental buildings (Heine-Geldern 1956).

It therefore seems to be more fruitful to look at the difference between the building materials employed, i.e. to make a distinction between brick and stone architecture. While they have certain elements in common, each of them is directed by its own set of imperatives, some geographical, some cultural and some technological.

Considering brick architecture first, there is, of course, no evidence of mud bricks ever having been used here, as the monsoon rains would have destroyed any such building in a very short time. With regard to burnt brick, as far as can be ascertained, the earliest instance of it was found in U-Thong, Southwestern Central Thailand, dated to the 3rd century B.C. (Loofs 1979:349). As these brick fragments can only derive from a religious building which can only have been a Buddhist one, this find could be seen as lending some support to the theory that this area may have been the *suvarṇabhūmi* to which Aśoka sent two Buddhist missionaries, and therefore the very first place in Southeast Asia where Buddhism took roots (Diskul 1964:6-8). That burnt brick technology itself also came from India is attested by the fact that in relevant Southeast Asian languages the word for burnt bricks is an Indian loan-word (Luce 1965:13).

However, it was only some centuries later that brick monuments

appeared in those parts of Mainland Southeast Asia which, being alluvial plains, offered plentiful clay and also fuel for brick manufacture. But none of these early brick monuments, be they in present Cambodia, southern Vietnam or Central Vietnam (Champa), used the True Arch. Only in Burma, in Srikshetra, does the True Arch appear, albeit not necessarily in the form of the radiating arch, but often in the pointed form, as early as the 7th century. From then on it is extensively used - in addition to the corbelling method - in the monumental brick architecture of the Irrawaddy valley, from Pegu to Pagan, whether the builders were Pyu, Mon or Burman. The conquest of Pagan by the Mongols in 1287 put an end to building activity there and the True Arch fell into oblivion. The brick monuments of Dvāraṭī (7th to 11th centuries), in the Menam valley, are unfortunately not well enough preserved to ascertain whether the True Arch was also used there. It seems that only one monument, the Wat Phra Men at Nakhon Pathom, may have contained a covered gallery, but it is impossible to know how it would have been constructed. Pierre Dupont thinks that the *voute à claveau* (arch with keystone) could possibly have been used as in Pagan, but admits that the problem of the arch in Mon architecture remains unsolved (Dupont 1959 :135-36). Since in Dupont's opinion the Mon civilization of Lower Burma, i.e. Thaton and Pegu, derived from Dvāraṭī (1959:ix), his statement would also appear to cover Mon architecture in Burma.

With very few exceptions (pointed arches in brick niches of 14th-century stupas at Sukhothai, and the 15th-century Wat Chet Yot in Chiangmai which, being a copy of the Bodh-Gaya, shows radiating arches in bricks), the True Arch appears in Thailand only in the late 17th century, introduced by the Italian Jesuit architect Thomas Valguarnera, in the service of King Narai. But it found such a limited application (in Narai's capital city at Lopburi and in two or three instances in Ayutthaya itself) that to this day the principle of the True Arch is unknown in rural Thailand, even to professional masons.

With regard to stone architecture it has been said that the "first native" building material was really laterite, not sandstone, at least in the coastal regions of Burma and Thailand (Luce 1965:12-13). However, from the examples given it appears that only very few monuments in laterite are known which could have used an arch. The Phra Sam Yot in Lopburi was mentioned, to which could be added the Wat Phra Pai Luang, the Wat Maha That and several other monuments in Sukhothai, much further to the north - hardly a coastal region. Thus it is clear that laterite was also used as building material in other parts of Southeast Asia - wherever it was readily available; nor was it necessarily only used at the beginning of the building activity in a given area, as the last-mentioned monuments date from the 14th century. In the case of areas where there were several possibilities (clay, laterite, sandstone), considerations other than availability must have taken over, such as the degree of difficulty in working the material or in producing decorations. As bricks and laterite cannot easily be sculpted for decoration, stucco was often added for that purpose where sandstone was unavailable, or, if there was plenty of the latter, the decorated parts of the brick or laterite monument were made of it. Furthermore, laterite is such a hard material that it cannot be hewn into other than very rough blocks, which *ipso facto* prohibits its use in the construction of True Arches with their tightly fitting *voussoirs* in monumental architecture. Indeed, there is no

evidence of a laterite monument using the True Arch anywhere.

The earliest monument built entirely in stone (sandstone) in Southeast Asia seems to be the Mahamuni shrine in Arakan, dated to the late 5th century and thought to derive from a Nalanda model (Mitra 1971:88; see also Gutman 1976:190); significantly, it was also intimately connected with the function of Arakanese Kingship (Gutman 1976:206). If the former assumption proves to be correct, we would have here the interesting case of a stone monument copying one in brick, as the original Nalanda temple was a brick monument, vividly described by the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang. This, once again, shows beyond doubt that the choice of building material is primarily determined by its availability: Arakan soil consisting almost solely of Mesozoic sediments, clay for bricks was hard to come by. Another observation by Hsuan Tsang is also rather interesting. He likens the Nalanda temple to that of Bodh-Gaya, the most famous brick monument in northern India which used prominently radiating arches, although corbel ones are also used in the same building. Both the Nalanda and the Mahamuni temples are too ruined to see whether they contained True Arches, but the possibility exists that they did.

Further to the east, what appears to be the earliest use of stone in Funan, in the late 5th century or early 6th century, is in the strange monument K of Oc-Eo. This monument, which is built in a mixture of brick and big stone slabs, the assemblage of which seems to derive from carpentry techniques in the same way as in the megalithic tomb of Xuân-Lộc, is thought to be a copy of the early Gupta cave temples of Nachna; similarities with the Bodh-Gaya temple are also perceived (Malleret 1959:355, 358). But again, there are no signs of the True Arch, although some wedge-shaped brick fragments were found at the site (Malleret 1959:292) which could be fragments of brick *voussoirs*. In Cambodia proper, the earliest monuments in stone are of the 7th century: the Asram Maha Rosei, possibly inspired by the Pallava temple of Panamalei, and the Kuk Phra That; neither uses the True Arch.

The first really massive stone monument in Southeast Asia, the Borobudur on Java, was constructed from the late 8th to the middle of the 9th century; the stone employed is a local volcanic stone, fairly easy to fashion and to carve. Even though the building of the monument itself, which essentially is the covering by terraces of a natural hill, did not involve any arching or vaulting, it is clear from the arched gates to these terraces, and from the many niches housing Buddha images, that the True Arch was not used. Instead the corbelling method was employed throughout, with T-shaped keystones in the case of the gates. However, an intriguing feature of these arched gates is that they carry a semi-circular relief decoration, while the inner contours of the corbelled niches are also carved in a semi-circular way - almost as if made to look like True Arches. Strangely enough, a very similar semi-circular relief decoration also appears on the corbelled entrance gates of 8th-century stone temples in Kashmir, notably the Sun Temple at Martand, which, moreover, also uses an identical T-shaped keystone to the Borobudur. Now, without wanting to go into the Percy Brown/Hermann Goetz controversy as to the source of inspiration for Kashmir architecture (Greco-Roman or Syriac-Byzantine, respectively), one may legitimately speculate about the possibility of a connection, as

indirect as it may have been, between these two distant regions, i.e. Kashmir and Java.

There seems to be a direct filiation from the Borobudur to the first major stone monument and the first temple-mountain in Mainland Southeast Asia, the Bakong in Rolous, Angkor, built in 881 by Indravarman, the second successor of the founder of the Angkorian kingdom, Jayavarman II. Although this has not generally been noted (the exception being Groslier 1961:98), the striking similarity of the Bakong with the Borobudur, going into architectural details such as the gateways and stairs to the upper terraces, suggests strongly that the former was in essence a copy of the latter. This is also quite plausible in political terms. If, as there is reason to believe, the future Jayavarman II was sent back to Cambodia about 790 by the Śailendras, having been hostage at their court for some years, to rule on their behalf, the fact that he soon thereafter (802) declared his independence from Java and the foundation of his own Angkorian kingdom must have soured relations between the two countries. When leaving Java he can have known only of the intention to build the Borobudur. Toward the end of the 9th century, however, i.e. three or more generations after these dramatic happenings, relations may have been normalized to the extent of there having been exchanges of travellers, if not official missions, transmitting to Cambodia not only the idea but also the technical and architectural details of the by then fully completed Borobudur (a Buddhist temple-mountain, as it were), including arched gateways in the corbelling method.

### Conclusions

With regard to the two main questions initially asked, the first one, i.e. why the Khmer kings did not use the True Arch in their monuments, is relatively easy to answer: because they did not need it. They certainly possessed the means and the managerial skill, as well as the political power and manpower, to have vast and highly complex monuments built; these included many ingenious architectural devices to achieve desired results in terms of form, symbolism, perspective, harmony and so on, within the framework of the functional needs arising from the role of the king. Whatever the interpretation of the Devarāja cult which prevailed throughout the Angkor period, i.e. whether the king was seen as a living god (cult of deified kingship, as mainly elaborated by Coedès 1952), or as a human who merely becomes part of the god during the performance of certain ceremonies (Kulke 1974), it is clear that these ceremonies - so utterly essential to the governing of the country and the organization of the society - only involved a few people assembled around a linga in a small enclosed shrine, and not large congregations of worshippers. There was thus no need for large roofed rooms which, in brick or stone construction could only have been built by True Arch vaulting. What these kings obviously also needed - but this aspect of kingship has never been investigated properly - was a means to permanently express their philosophy or guiding principles for ruling, or to advertise their achievements in a didactic manner to what must be presumed to have been basically an illiterate population, i.e. one which could not be reached by inscriptions. Hence the need for wall space for reliefs which, however, need not be roofed over. If they were to be seen in the latter way, as for

instance in Angkor Wat, a comparatively narrow gallery sufficed, for the construction of which, again, the True Arch was not necessary. Fortifications, like the mighty stone wall surrounding Angkor Thom, were built to include gates narrow enough to be bridged by corbelling arches.

Where these Khmer kings, and in particular Jayavarman VII (1181-c.1220), who covered his kingdom with a network of highways, would really have needed the True Arch was in the construction of stone bridges. Why they did not use the True Arch there (see Marchal 1964:147-49 for implications), not even in the longest such bridge known, the Spean Praptos of 85m, therefore now emerges as a question historically more important than why the True Arch was not used in monuments - which has been satisfactorily answered anyway. For the absence of the True Arch in bridge construction can only mean two things: either that Khmer engineers of the 12th century were unaware of this method of construction, which would be highly surprising, or that they knew it, but preferred nevertheless to use the far less efficient corbelling method, which would be equally strange, as they have shown themselves otherwise to be highly competent builders. The Chinese had been using the True Arch in bridge construction possibly since the 1st millennium B.C. (Needham 1971:147), and certainly since Han times, from which time on there was constant, if sporadic contact first with Funan and then with Chenla and Angkor. Moreover, the late 12th century saw an upsurge of bridge-building activity in China (Needham 1971:148) and from exactly the same time there is evidence of large quantities of Chinese goods, namely 876 silk veils, being in the possession of the newly-founded Ta Prohm sanctuary at Angkor (Coedès 1963:96). This obviously presupposes active trade relations with China, attested also by a number of other sources at Angkor, and makes it almost inconceivable that the Khmers, who were otherwise so skilled in hydraulic works, had not heard about the more efficient Chinese way of building bridges by using the True Arch. Such bridges, unlike the Corbel Arch ones built by the Khmers, spanned rivers properly instead of almost damming them, and thereby causing floods or diversions. The Corbel Arch bridge was indeed the Indian model to which Khmer bridge engineers seem to have desperately stuck. Ancient Indian stone bridges have all been "constructed according to the principle of Hindu architecture which has a fondness for horizontal forms and deliberately ignores the [True] arch ..." (Deloche 1973:9; translation mine). So few were left of them that in an 1821 work devoted to ancient monuments it was thought that there had been only one ancient stone bridge in the whole of India (Langlès 1821: II, 56). The True Arch, in stone or brick, only came into the country with the Moguls.

We have here a most intriguing case of non-acceptance of an element of material culture which warrants further investigation. Could it be that psychological considerations, such as perhaps the fear that to depart from the established Indian model may make the world order collapse, were given greater weight than practical ones? Or was it just the sheer inertia of tradition, mentioned earlier? In any case, it was the bridges which soon collapsed ...

Turning to Burma, we find that the reasons for the use of the True Arch (mainly in the form of vaulting) must have been analogous to those which prompted the Khmers to ignore it: there was a need for it. As

can be seen from the monuments and their Buddha figures, a new kind of image-worship must have developed which necessitated larger rooms for worshippers to assemble and maybe also to circumambulate. As has been said, large rooms or wide galleries cannot be roofed over in brick architecture by corbel vaulting which would collapse; only True Arch vaulting can achieve this.

It has been argued that at the origin of this sort of temple may have been a *cetiya* (stupa), standing in the centre of a square precinct surrounded by brick walls, with temporary awnings covering the space in between; these awnings would eventually have been replaced by a permanent roof (Griswold 1964:28-29). In this case a half True Arch vaulting would be sufficient. And indeed, it is this semi-ogival vaulting which is one of the most characteristic features of the Burmese brick monuments - not found elsewhere in this profusion. If the idea of the full True Arch vaulting was obviously not invented in Burma (which it must have reached via India, although the exact route is at present impossible to ascertain, mainly on account of difficulties in the chronology of the archaeology in the northern Bay of Bengal area), that of the half vaulting may well have been a local discovery.

But here again, psychological factors must also be taken into account. As is well known, Indian architects did not hold the True Arch in high esteem; they deemed it so low in fact that it could be said of them that they "carried their horror of an arch to an excess ..." (Fergusson 1967:311). Maybe it was this fact which made Burmese builders in many cases mask the True Arch on top of entrance doors with a stucco decoration imitating corbel arching, so as not to offend Indian sensibilities? On the other hand, the fact that the holiest Buddhist shrine, the Bodh-Gaya, displays so prominently the True Arch, surely must have invested the latter with a certain amount of respectability in the eyes of Buddhists, who therefore could be forgiven for having a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards this architectural element.

It is commonly held that the principle of the True Arch itself was re-invented in Burma, as there seemed to be no examples of it in India, except for the Bodh-Gaya. As is well known, the latter monument was restored by Burmese craftsmen in the 11th century who, in the opinion of the 19th-century re-restorer General Cunningham, introduced the True Arch there in the process. Cunningham, however, also draws attention to the fact that names of Bengali craftsmen were engraved on bricks used in this restoration; these craftsmen may also have had some knowledge of the True Arch. The question of who brought the True Arch to the Bodh-Gaya must therefore remain open, the more so as it is now acknowledged that "many isolated occurrences" of the True Arch are found in pre-Muslim Indian architecture (Coomaraswamy 1965:73), in addition to that of the Bodh-Gaya, although it is true that it never became a common feature of that architecture. Coomaraswamy mentions eight examples, all situated in the northern part of the peninsula, from Kashmir in the west to the gates of Bengal in the east, which could lend some plausibility to the assumption that the True Arch, introduced to India from the west, may have subsequently found its way across the subcontinent to the Bodh-Gaya site.

Image-worship in neighbouring and chronologically-following Sukhothai and Ayutthaya having developed differently; there was no need for the True Arch in religious architecture there - Buddha figures were simply protected by light roofs on posts or pillars and the stupa became



separated from this ensemble by being situated behind it.

It is hoped that the above very preliminary and tentative notes may contribute, be it ever so modestly, to the elucidation of a complex, rich but elusive topic, namely the interplay of man, monuments and systems in Southeast Asia - a topic into which so much research still needs to be done.

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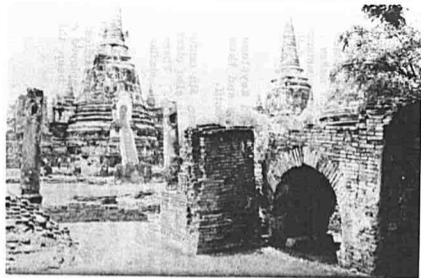


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## LEGENDS TO PHOTOGRAPHS

1. East gate of Banteay Srei, Angkor, Cambodia, built in 967 AD. Clearly a wooden structure "translated" into sandstone. This translation is optical only, not structural, as the retention of the utterly useless "wooden" pegs indicates and also the fact that the rectangular shape of the stones cuts right through the lines of the "wooden" structure.
2. The Wat Phra Pai Luang in Sukhothai, northern Thailand. A Khmer monument built in the late 12th century, it shows the typical form of the Khmer tower, as seen in the buildings of Angkor, but is constructed in laterite - a building material used in Angkor only for the basis of certain monuments as for the rest there was plentiful sandstone available. Note that the Corbel Arch over the entrance is held in place by the structure above it, even in the absence of a T-shaped keystone.
3. A gallery at Pimai temple, northeastern Thailand. Khmer, beginning of 12th century. Much of it has already collapsed and what is still standing shows why: the width to be bridged was just a little too great for Corbel Arches and there was nothing on top to keep it together. Inside surface smoothed.
4. Half-collapsed Corbel Arch on an entrance gate of Banam Rong temple near Pimai, northeastern Thailand. When the arch collapses, it is not generally the individual stones which slide and fall towards the centre of the arch, but blocks of several stones somehow sticking together, although no mortar is used in the construction of these buildings. By holding each other up in a precarious balance, these blocks may prevent a total collapse of the arch.
5. Entrance porch at flight of steps leading to the third gallery, Borobudur, Java late 8th-early 9th century. The arch is built in the corbelling method but it is made very solid and secure not only by the use of relatively large and well-cut stones, but also by the insertion of a T-shaped keystone (here in the form of the moustaches and the "chin" of the monster-head or *kāla-makara*) which makes the collapse of such an arch virtually impossible in normal circumstances (i.e. without earthquakes or soil movements). Note the band-like decoration motif which by being semi-circular on the top part of the porch seems to accentuate the latter's "roundness".
6. The same porch seen from behind. Here the T-shaped keystone is particularly clearly visible as this is a restored piece and thus is left plain. This side also bore a semi-circular decoration motif.
7. Front view of the "Temple of the Sun" at Martand, Kashmir, 8th century. In spite of its inner contours being smoothed, this is also clearly a Corbel Arch, also with a T-shaped keystone at its top. There is also a semi-circular decorative band going around the arch, similar to that at the porches of the Borobudur (see Photo no 5).
8. A brick structure in Ayutthaya, Thailand, using the True Arch. Although being in the vicinity of stupas built not long after the foundation of the city in 1350, this structure can, at the earliest, date from the late 17th century when the Thai King Narai employed an Italian Jesuit architect at his court; it may well have been this architect, Thomas Valguarnera, who had this structure built.

9. An almost - but not quite - perfect radiating arch made of brick **voussairs** in Pagan, northern Burma, c. 12th century. The fact that a triangular keystone is used, rather than the same wedge-shaped **voussairs** throughout, seems to indicate that the basic principle of the True Arch was not really understood and that these arches may have developed from the half-True Arch.
10. The first bridge on the road from Angkor, Cambodia, to Champa, built by King Jayavarman VII in c. 1200. Now simply called **Spean Thma** ("Bridge of Stone"), it is built of sandstone using the corbelling method for its spans.





# 13

## Vietnamese Ceramics and Cultural Identity: Evidence from the Ly and Tran Dynasties

John S. Cuy

### Introduction

The glazed ceramics of Vietnam represent the most sustained and sophisticated expression of the potter's art in Southeast Asia and yet they are perhaps the least understood of those traditions. The lack of critical enquiry into the distinctive character of Vietnamese ceramics has been the product of a tendency to view them, along with other aspects of Vietnamese cultural expression, as a "curious provincialism", [1] a pale reflection of Chinese culture. The history of Vietnamese ceramics does, broadly speaking, parallel the evolution of Chinese ceramics from the Han period onwards in respect of form and style. It is equally true however that the Vietnamese potter gave expression to elements of cultural identity which are essentially Vietnamese. This is to be seen in the distinctive manipulation of ceramic forms and, more significantly, in the expansion of the decorative repertoire to incorporate motifs and design elements unknown in the Chinese tradition. Moreover, the many motifs which were borrowed were reinterpreted with a confidence and sophistication which often produced results instilled with a freshness and energy unmatched in the Chinese originals. In this paper I wish to examine the decorative repertoire of ceramic design during the Lý and Trần dynasties, 11th to 14th centuries, and to argue that the choice and interpretation of motifs seen on the ceramic products of this period constitute conscious statements of Vietnamese cultural identity.

The evolution of glazed ceramics in Vietnam reflects the shifting requirements of Vietnamese society over time. The earliest wares were produced in response to the needs of sinicized elements of Vietnamese society which appeared during the Han occupation in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. These vessels, which have been excavated from Han tombs of fired brick, parallel the funerary goods of Han China. Current evidence points to the Red River delta region and the province of Thanh Hóa, immediately to the south, as the principal regions for early production of ceramics in Vietnam. By the mid 3rd century A.D. the Red River delta was already supporting the bulk of the population of Tonkin, a pattern which persists today. [2] A lacuna exists in the ceramic evidence from the collapse of direct Han control in the 3rd century A.D. through until the beginning of the 10th century. Although

the archaeological evidence is so far lacking, a number of major developments in the cultural life of northern Vietnam indicate that local ceramic production was sustained. The principal demand for glazed ceramic items probably resulted from the extensive building programmes initiated by the rulers to service an increasingly influential Buddhist monastic community. The construction of temples, monasteries and pagodas generated a demand for tiles and glazed bricks. Under the nationalist Lý and Trần dynasties, wares intended for domestic use assumed a new importance with the evolution of a distinctively Vietnamese interpretation of Chinese monochrome and iron-decorated styles. From the early 14th century Vietnam entered the international ceramic trade, producing a calligraphic iron-decorated style and the renowned blue-and-white wares which have been found at sites scattered from Japan to the Middle East.

During the centuries preceding the reunification of China under the Sui and Tang dynasties, Vietnam maintained a high degree of independence from centralized Chinese control. The Sui invaded Vietnam in 602, and with the establishment of the Tang, China asserted an unprecedented degree of influence in the affairs of Vietnam which was to continue over the next three centuries. In 679 northern Vietnam was declared the Protectorate of Annam ("Pacified South") by the Tang court and remained under direct Chinese control until the end of the 9th century.

Resistance to political control and cultural sinicization remained a constant theme of Vietnamese history in this period. Whilst cultural divergences were deeply valued and openly stressed, a concern not to appear "barbarian", itself a Chinese concept, tempered Vietnamese assertions of an essentially Southeast Asian cultural identity.[3] It is in this context that Wolters' localization concept provides a useful tool for interpreting the contemporary significance of ceramic decoration. Wolters stresses the importance of identifying and interpreting indigenous elements, as well as those elements which, if originally alien, have been "localized". To isolate those elements which allow us to distinguish Vietnamese ceramics from Chinese examples is to come closer to identifying their local character. By drawing in turn on the broader historical, literary and archaeological evidence, we can begin to interpret the significance and meaning of these objects in Vietnamese society.

### **Vietnam's renaissance: Lý and Trần dynasties**

The struggles of the 10th century saw the emergence of Vietnam as an independent kingdom, having resisted successive attempts by the Southern Han rulers of Guangdong, in 931 and 938, and the Northern Song in 980 to reassert Chinese control.[4] In 1009 the Lý clan won popular support and instituted the first great national dynasty under which Vietnamese cultural values were strongly reasserted. A remarkable range of distinctive glazed ceramics was produced during this period. The early Lý dynasty wares are characterized by incised and painted decoration with a brown design on a white body. The largest collections of these are held in the Hanoi Historical Museum, Musées Royaux, Brussels, and Musée Guimet, Paris.[5] They are glazed stoneware vessels, often of large dimensions, decorated with elaborate designs, typically arrayed in a series of horizontal bands or vertical panels

(Figs. 1 & 2). The vessel is covered with a clear glaze and the design incised boldly into the surface, removing the glaze in the manner of "scraffitto". The motifs are then painted with a brown glaze solution. Carved areas where the clear glaze and added brown do not meet remain unglazed, revealing the soft greyish-white body. Occasionally this scheme is reversed, revealing the unglazed design against a brown glazed ground (Fig. 2).

The technique may have evolved out of the Vietnamese potter's experience in the ceramic relief carving which was traditionally applied to decorative brick and tile work, combined with an awareness of Chinese underglaze brown decorative techniques, as seen in Jizhou wares for example. The royal city at Thăng Long (Hanoi), begun in 1010 with the founding of the Lý dynasty, must have been richly decorated with such tiles. Excavations in Hanoi early this century revealed bricks decorated with carved patterns, principally circles and rhombuses, and tiles, mostly cylindrical roof tiles carved with floral motifs, dragons and phoenixes. Flat and raised tiles were also found, decorated with clear or polychromed glazes.[6] The motivation to delineate a design with the cutting edge of a bamboo tool rather than with a brush may well stem from this experience. The dextrous handling of the Chinese brush may be expected to have been confined to the literati and bureaucracy and not yet the common experience of artisan potters.

The brown-and-white incised wares exhibit a limited repertoire of forms, the most common being a tall cylindrical urn with a raised lotus petal collar beneath the mouthrim, and a broad shallow basin with a rolled rim and flat base. Small applied floral bosses are a regular feature and bear close comparison to those on 10th-century Northern Song examples.[7] Elaborate floral and leaf meanders dominate the designs. Designs such as the cloud and vegetal meander show the most direct affinity with Vietnamese brick and tile decoration (Fig. 3). A covered jar collected by C. Huet in Đãi La (Hanoi), is decorated with lotus flowers and leaves in a series of vertical panels (Fig. 1). The glaze is thin and glossy. An animal-head spout appears on the shoulder, and is balanced by the modelled form of a parrot, a favourite bird of the tropical lands of Vietnam and a much desired luxury in Tang China. The popularity of this latter motif was seen in a gold dagger excavated on the site of the Lý dynasty palace in Hanoi modelled in the form of a parrot.[8]

Long-tailed birds appear as a favoured subject, and may be the native peacock of Vietnam (Fig. 4). Such birds were abundant in Vietnam, judging from frequent references to them in Tang literature concerned with the southern lands. The tails of such birds were recorded as part of the annual tribute sent from the Tang protectorate of Annam to the court at Changan. To the Tang officials serving in Annam the harsh cry of the peacock was a reminder of their exile: "The Bird of Việt startles your dream of home".[9] But to the 13th-century Vietnamese diplomat sent north to China the peacock is evoked as a metaphor for the Vietnam to which he longs to return:

You are following the geese across the mountain  
 passes to face the northern snow.  
 But your heart is that of the Vietnamese bird  
 longing for its southern branch.[10]

The poet is consciously utilizing the nostalgic device familiar from

Chinese poetry and reversing the symbolic function of the peacock imagery to express Vietnamese sentiments. To the newly independent Vietnamese the splendidly coloured birds of Vietnam may have been evoked to symbolize the uniqueness of their land. The depiction of such birds amidst stylized foliage gave a lively and distinctly localized character to these ceramics. The motif of the long-tailed bird is however an ancient one, found on the early bronze drums common to the Yue people. Its depiction could also have been intended to evoke the antiquity of the Vietnamese people and culture, and hence its durability and resilience.

Other non-Chinese motifs also appear in the decorative repertoire of Vietnamese ceramics from the 11th century, such as the elephant. Elephants still roamed the forests of Vietnam in the first millennium and their ivory was regularly sent to China as a prized item of tribute. Elephants were domesticated and entered the popular mythology as wise creatures capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood. A story of Tang origins tells of an elephant which guarded the hills of Annam, allowing only honest travellers to pass in safety. The elephant depicted on the Lý dynasty jar (Fig. 5) wears the harnesses of a domesticated beast, though not as resplendently decorated as those witnessed by a Chinese diplomat on mission to Vietnam:

Golden halters webbed their heads  
Brocade draperies hung from their bodies ...[11]

Perhaps most interesting of all are the warrior figures of a distinctive Southeast Asian character. A storage jar in the Hanoi Historical Museum (Fig. 6) is decorated with two warriors, bearing spears and shields, in animated postures reminiscent of ceremonial dance forms found in mainland Southeast Asia. The warriors wear short garments with serpentine patterns on the thighs, perhaps the tattooing to which the Chinese commentaries refer. Tattooing had long been identified by the Chinese as one of the distinguishing ethnic characteristics of the "Hundred Yueh" tribes, stretching from southern Zhejiang to Yunnan and into northern Vietnam.[12] Chou Ch'u-fei, in the section of his *Ling Wai Tai Ta* of 1178 referring to Vietnam, observes that "the tattooing on their bodies resembles the designs on the bronze drums".[13] The warriors' shields are decorated with dragon designs, being water spirits in Viet culture. The rather naive characterization of the figures suggests that they may represent non-sinicized Vietnamese tribal peoples who "since antiquity ... have been noted for their tattooing and cropped hair".[14] With their appearance in Vietnamese ceramics decoration we sense a strong assertion of indigenous cultural concerns and ethnic identity.

A second category of ceramics prevalent during the 11th and 12th centuries (Lý dynasty) was white stoneware with modelled lotus-petal decoration. This group is represented by flat dishes, sometimes with a stem foot, bowls of lotus-petal configuration, stem-cups and covered jars (Figs. 7 & 8). Whilst precise Chinese models are often lacking, many of the design elements in these wares can be identified in Northern Song wares of the 11th and 12th centuries.[15] These ceramics may represent wares produced in Tonkin for the use of the local Vietnamese elite who, through "tributary" relations with metropolitan China, may have absorbed the Song courtly taste for white wares. The prevalence of the lotus-petal motif may reflect the strength of Buddhist practice in

the Lý court at Thăng Long (Hanoi). A group of Chinese Song white glazed stoneware sutra-cases, for example, made expressly for the Japanese market, exemplify the association between the lotus motif and Buddhism.[16]

A lotus-petal stem cup (Fig. 7), collected in northern Vietnam, has a crispness of form which suggests metal prototypes. The Indianized cultures of mainland Southeast Asia, including the Hinduized Chams in central Vietnam, excelled in gold and silver vessels utilizing the lotus-petal motif. In 1044 and again in 1069 the Vietnamese conducted seaborne raids against Champa and sacked the Cham capital of Vijaya, no doubt including in their booty the gold wares for which the Cham craftsmen were greatly admired. Similar forms appear in contemporary Khmer ceramics and persist even today in mainland Southeast Asian silver and gold work, particularly lime containers. Champa metalwork, of Indian derivation, may have contributed to the form of these Vietnamese ceramics, along with inspiration from the ceramics of Song China. In this way the cultural elements absorbed by Vietnam from her southern borders and beyond provided some degree of counterbalance to the Chinese culture in whose shadow Vietnam attempted to grow. Conscious efforts were made in the Lý periods towards cultural self-sufficiency and to preserve elements of speech, dress and other customs which would ensure that Việt ethnic and cultural identity was preserved.[17]

The flat tray with double lotus-petal border and a shallow, waisted foot (Fig. 8) represents, in a sense, a Vietnamese resolution of these two contending decorative alternatives, the Indianized elements persisting in mainland Southeast Asian culture, and the pervasive Chinese element. The opportunities for traffic in goods and ideas between Vietnam and her neighbours to the north and to the south were considerable. The modelled lotus-petal design, known in Cham metal-working traditions, was also a recurrent form in Song ceramics, the origins of which may be traced to Tang metalwork of ultimate Sassanian or Soghdian inspiration transmitted via the Central Asian Silk Route.[18] The incised and punched lotus spray design on the interior relates to the Cizhou tradition of Northern Song which drew most directly on Song metalwork. The genealogy can be traced through 11th century Cizhou-type wares to 7th-8th century silver and gold vessels excavated at the Tang capital of Chang'an. O. Janse excavated a lotus-petal tray of this type from a tomb in Thanh Hóa along with Song style bowls.[19]

A distinctive Vietnamese development in response to a local need was the lime container used to store the ground shell lime used in the preparation of betel. Lime pots were of squat form with a small aperture on the shoulder, sometimes with a pedestal foot, and with a "basket" handle which became increasingly elaborate over time. The earliest examples, simple squat jars with traces of lime still evident, have been excavated from 10th-12th century contexts.[20] The lime container, whilst retaining its singular character, reflects the shifting stylistic preoccupation evident in the mainstream of Vietnamese ceramic production. An example collected by C. Huet in Thanh Hóa, circa 13th century (Fig. 9), is decorated by a double row of over-lapping serrated patterns, the so-called "pineapple" design seen on Yaozhou and Ding wares of Jingdezhen.[21] The handle has evolved into a wondrously organic vine-like form, its tendrils extending onto the shoulder of the jar where they became stylized areca nuts. It is

the areca nut blended with lime that forms the essential element of the betel quid chewed by the people of Southeast Asia. Lê Tác, a Vietnamese writer of the early 14th century, recorded that the offering of betel to visitors formed an essential part of Vietnamese hospitality, as was the custom elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Glazed monochrome wares appear during the Trần dynasty, with white, green and brown glazed wares predominant, typically plain or with moulded or impressed lotus-petal or other floral motifs in the interior. Kiln wasters are reported from both Thanh Hóa province and in the vicinity of Hanoi. Celadon-type glazes are relatively rare amongst Vietnamese monochromes. Figure 10 illustrates a bowl with an incised vegetal meander design reminiscent of the earlier painted brown decorated wares. It has a cracked celadon glaze and a bevelled recessed base. A beaker in the form of a Buddhist alms bowl displays the typical cream-white glaze over its buff stoneware body and a mauve-brown iron wash painted on the base. A distinctive apple-green copper glaze type also emerges, particularly favoured on small cups, and jars. The most distinguished Vietnamese monochromes appear among the white glazed wares, and are remarkable for their purity of form, sharing much in common with Song monochromes.

#### Early trade ceramics

The 14th century marks a watershed in the development of Vietnamese ceramics, the transition from domestic production to participation in the international ceramic trade. This shift is marked by the development of underglaze painted decoration, initially in iron pigment which fired to a brown-black colour. The earliest datable evidence of Vietnamese ceramics as an item of international trade is a fragment of a bowl in this style, painted in underglaze iron black with a chrysanthemum spray medallion on the interior and an iron chocolate-coloured wash on the base (Fig. 11). It was excavated from the precinct of the Kanzeon-ji, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu, Japan, together with a wooden plate inscribed in Chinese ink with a date corresponding to 1330 A.D.[23] This find securely established the production of Vietnamese underglaze iron-decorated stoneware to at least the early 14th century. The kilns responsible for these wares have not yet been securely identified. The remains of kilns have been located at a number of sites in Thanh Hóa, Hanoi and Hà Nam Ninh,[24] but we await precise information on the identification of the types of wares associated with each region. Fragments of iron decorated stonewares similar to the early export type have reportedly been discovered at Bát Tràng on the outskirts of Hanoi.[25]

This class of ware appears to be the dominant Vietnamese trade ceramics of the 14th century. It is characterized by a fine grey-white paste which enabled the decorator to paint directly onto the body without first applying a slip. The entire surface was then covered in a clear glaze, which due to mineral impurities, tended to fire a straw colour or to acquire a greenish tinge. Fine cracking of the glaze was common. This decoration was confined to small-scale wares; bowls, saucers, plates, beakers, jars and bottles.[26] The style of decoration may be described as sketchy and calligraphic, the central motif being typically a loosely-drawn floral spray enclosed in a single or double circle and with a debased classic scroll on the rim (Fig. 12). Whether

these wares were developed expressly for export is unclear. C. Huet's collection includes a kiln waster, reportedly from Đai La (Hanoi), in the form of a stack of bowls with the floral spray motif painted in underglaze blue.

The appearance of underglaze decoration in Vietnamese ceramics must be seen in the light of developments in China. Underglaze painting in iron-brown and copper-green was being successfully used in the decoration of Changsha wares in at least the 9th century, as seen in the ewers excavated at Ningbo, Zhejiang Province in 1973, which were almost certainly destined for export,[27] and the technique soon spread to the kilns of Guangdong. Examples of Changsha ware have been discovered from Java to Persia along the great sea routes.[28] Kilns in the vicinity of Guangzhou and Quanzhou both appear to have produced ceramics decorated in underglaze iron for the export market.[29] Constant commercial traffic between these ports and those of Tonkin would have facilitated the ready transmission of such techniques. Nonetheless, despite the technical parallels, no specific stylistic prototype for the distinctive Vietnamese iron-decorated wares has been identified, strongly suggesting Vietnamese initiative in this class of ceramic design.

#### Vietnamese blue and white

During the second half of the 14th century cobalt began to be used in ceramic decoration, heralding a new era in Vietnamese ceramics. Initially cobalt-blue followed the design familiar from iron-decorated wares. On occasions the two colours were used in combination. The source of the cobalt is not known but it may be surmised that it came from Middle Eastern importers operating in Guangzhou or perhaps even directly from Moslem merchant ships en route for south China. Chinese native sources, such as those discovered in Yunnan, only began to supply Jingdezhen after 1426. Subsequently, the Vietnamese may have been able to tap this source, the Red River providing a natural bridge between Yunnan and Tonkin.

That Vietnamese underglaze cobalt-blue decorated wares were produced in the 14th century is established from trade sources. A fragment of a bowl, decorated in underglaze cobalt-blue with a sketchy floral spray on the interior and a brown painted slip base, was found in 1980 at Nakijin Gusuku, in the Ryukyus, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. Trade is recorded from the Ryukyus to Vietnam from 1363. The castle site from which this sherd was excavated was destroyed in 1416, providing an early 15th century terminal date. The painting style relates directly to the iron brown decorated wares which we know were in production nearly a century earlier, and this example may, with reasonable certainty, be assigned to the second half of the 14th century.

A critical event in Sino-Vietnamese relations which may have triggered the new wave of Chinese influences seen in 15th century Vietnamese ceramics was the invasion by the Ming armies of Yunglo which occupied Vietnam from 1407 to 1427. Culturally the occupation had a devastating effect, as the occupiers, proclaiming an active policy of sinification, attempted to transform Vietnam into a Chinese province. Libraries and archives are claimed to have been taken to China and are presumed to have perished. Monuments associated with the achievements of the Lý and Trần dynasties were demolished in an attempt to erase the achievements and identity of Vietnamese culture. Vietnam

effectively resisted Chinese attempts to re-establish permanent political control. However, resistance to subtler cultural penetration of Vietnamese society by Chinese values, concepts and beliefs was less effective. Evidence of this cultural influence, resented as it was by sectors of the Vietnamese intelligentsia, was manifest in many aspects of Vietnamese social and cultural expression. Vietnam's successful venture into the manufacture and export of quality trade ceramics, in direct competition with Chinese wares, was coloured by this relationship.

The expanding production of Chinese-influenced blue-and-white wares in the 15th century may be explained by access to markets. The period 1436 to 1465 was marked by the active discouragement of overseas trade by the Chinese court. It is possible that Chinese merchants in Tonkin or entrepreneurs in south China with close commercial links with Tonkin actively encouraged the production of Vietnamese trade ceramics in periods of restricted Chinese trade. Such wares would sell most readily to former Chinese markets if decorated in the Chinese style (Figs. 13 & 14).

The repertoire of ceramic forms and design motifs utilized in their decoration revealed a new direction in Vietnamese ceramics, away from localized statements towards a growing conformity to Chinese models and conventions. A shift in attitude appears, away from a desire, or need, to make explicit statements of cultural identity towards a conscious effort to employ the decorative language of the Chinese ceramic artist for commercial advantage. Vietnamese kilns embarked on the commercial production and export of glazed ceramics from the 14th century, in direct competition with the Chinese who had traditionally dominated the lucrative trade ceramics market in Southeast Asia and beyond.[30]

It is the ceramics of the Lý and Trần dynasties, however, which immediately preceded the era of trade production, which reveal the strongest statements of Vietnamese cultural identity. That this should be so is hardly surprising, this era being traditionally associated with a renaissance of Vietnamese culture. Lý dynasty Vietnam re-established independence and the Trần dynasty effectively resisted successive invasion attempts by the Yuan rulers. The brief but devastating early Ming occupation erased many of the achievements of the Lý and Trần periods and today the surviving ceramic evidence provides one of the few avenues of insight into Vietnamese cultural identity of this period.



## NOTES

1. M. Goloubew "La Province du Thanh-hóa et sa ceramique", *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* Vol. VII, No. 2 (1931-32), p.115.
2. J. Holmgren *Chinese Colonization of Northern Vietnam: Administrative Geography and Political Developments in the Tongking Delta, First to Sixth Centuries A.D.* Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1980, p.7.
3. See A.B. Woodside *Vietnam and the Chinese Model* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971 for a discussion of the ambiguities of attitude in the Vietnamese perception of the Chinese presence, and O.W. Wolters *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982, pp.73-82.
4. See K. Gardiner "Vietnam and Southern Han", Part I and II *Papers on Far Eastern History* 23 (1981), pp.64-110, and 28 (1983), pp.23-48.
5. I wish to thank Mrs Janine Schotsmans, Curator, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, for kindly supplying photographs of ceramics from the Clément Huet Collection, and Professor Trần Quốc Vượng for photographs of ceramics from Hanoi Historical Museum.
6. Trần Quốc Vượng and Nguyễn Vĩnh Long, *Hanoi, From the Origins to the 19th century*, Hanoi, *Vietnamese Studies* No. 48, 1977, pp.23 and 31.
7. Compare M. Tregear *Song Ceramics* London, Thames & Hudson, 1981, p.11.
8. Tran Quoc Vuong, *op.cit.* p.24.
9. See E.H. Schafer *The Vermilion Bird. T'ang Images of the South* Berkeley, University of California, 1967, p.237. This work provides a rich and imaginative evocation of the Chinese perception of Vietnam, based largely on Tang poetry and other literary sources.
10. O.W. Wolters, *op.cit.* p.78.
11. E. Schafer *op.cit.* p.236.
12. Such tattooing was widely practised amongst the people of mainland Southeast Asia, see J.S. Guy *Palm-leaf and Paper: Illustrated Manuscripts of India and Southeast Asia* Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, 1982, p.62.
13. Chou Ch'u-fei *Ling Wai Tai Ta* (1178), Shanghai edition, 1935-7, p.18. Cited in J.K. Whitmore, herein.
14. E. Schafer *op.cit.* p.53.
15. Compare Y. Mino *Freedom of Clay and Brush through Seven Centuries in Northern China: Tz'u-chou Type Wares, 960-1600 A.D.* Indianapolis Museum of Arts, 1980.
16. Compare S. Hayashiya and H. Trubner *Chinese Ceramics from Japanese Collections: T'ang through Ming Dynasty* New York, Asia Society, 1977, p.11.
17. K. Taylor "A Brief Summary of Vietnamese History", in *Southeast Asian Ceramic Society Vietnamese Ceramics* Singapore, 1982, p.15.

18. See W. Willetts "Bridges: Internal and External Formal Relationships in Vietnamese Ceramics of the 11th-16th Centuries", in *Southeast Asian Ceramic Society*, op.cit. p.10.
19. O.R. Janse **Archaeological Research in Indo-China** 3 vols. Boston, Harvard University Press, 1947-51, Bruges, St. Catherine Press, 1958, Vol. 3, pls.80-82.
20. C. Huet "Les pots a chaux les pipes a eau", **Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire** 4 (1941), p.75.
21. Compare Southeast Asian Ceramic Society **Song Ceramics** Singapore, 1983, pl.99.
22. O.W. Wolters "Assertions of cultural well-being in 14th century Vietnam", **Journal of Southeast Asian Studies** Vol. 10, No. 2 (1979), p.443.
23. I am deeply indebted to Mr Meitoku Kamei of the Kyushu Historical Museum for supplying me with this information and photographs of recent finds of Vietnamese ceramics in Japan.
24. Recently reported by Trần Khánh Chương, Institute of Fine Art, Hanoi, in an unpublished paper.
25. Personal communication from Professor Phạm Huy Thông, Director of the Institute of Archaeology, Hanoi, October 1981.
26. Compare Southeast Asian Ceramic Society **Vietnamese Ceramics** pls.72-80, 83.
27. Australian Art Exhibitions Corporation **The Chinese Exhibition** Melbourne, 1976, p.213.
28. See J.S. Guy **Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia Ninth to Sixteenth Centuries** Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, in-press.
29. Compare P. Hughes-Stanton and Rose Kerr **Kiln Sites of Ancient China** London, Oriental Ceramic Society, 1981, pls.167, 213.
30. For the distribution of Vietnamese trade ceramics, see J. Guy "Vietnamese Trade Ceramics", in *Southeast Asian Ceramic Society Vietnamese Ceramics*, pp.28-35.



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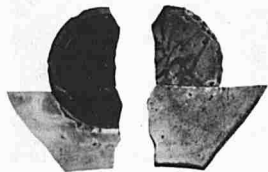
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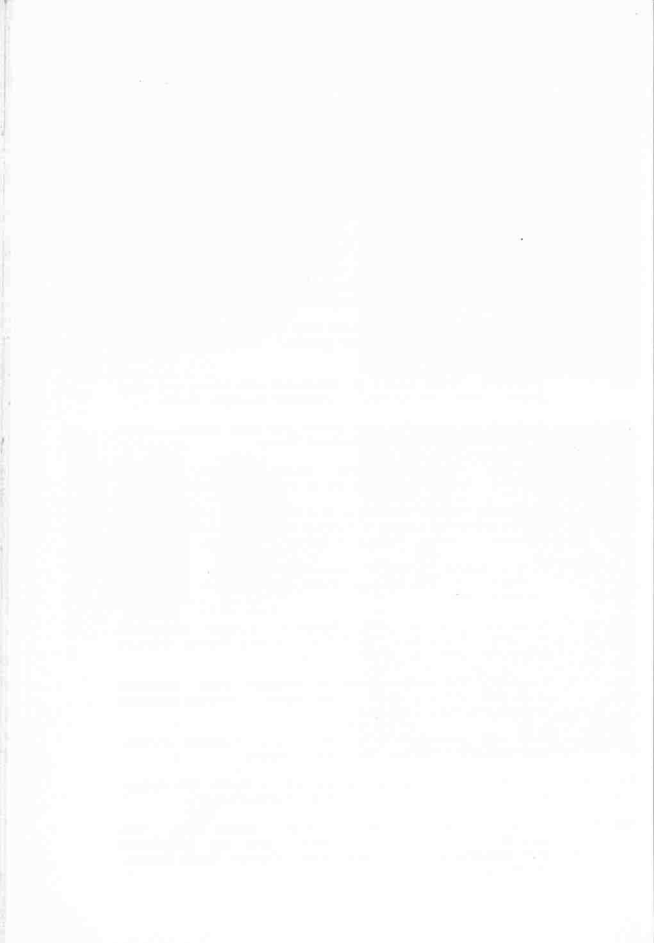
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## ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Covered jar decorated with brown and clear glazes. Height 22.2cm. 10th-12th century. Provenance Đai La. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, Collection Huet.
- Fig. 2 Storage jar decorated with incised chrysanthemum garland against a brown glazed ground. 10th-12th century. Historical Museum, Hanoi.
- Fig. 3 Fragment of a jar decorated with brown clear glazes. Height 22cm. 10th-12th century. Provenance Đai La. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, Collection Huet.
- Fig. 4 Covered storage jar decorated with incised bird and foliage design in brown and clear glazes. 10th-12th century. Historical Museum, Hanoi.
- Fig. 5 Elephant. Detail from a jar decorated with brown and clear glazes. 10th-12th century. Historical Museum, Hanoi.
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- Fig. 9 Lime container. Glazed stoneware. Height 18cm. Circa 13th century. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, Collection Huet.
- Fig. 10 Bowl with celadon glaze. Diameter 13.5cm. 12th-13th century. Provenance Thanh-hóa. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, Collection Huet.
- Fig. 11 Fragments of a bowl decorated in underglaze black, excavated in Dazaifu, Kyushu, Japan. 14th century. Kyushu Historical Museum, Dazaifu, Fukuoka.
- Fig. 12 Dish with underglaze brown decoration. Diameter 27.5cm. 14th century. Private collection, Australia.
- Fig. 13 Dish decorated in underglaze blue with a double fish design. 15th century. Collection Mr. F.W. Bodor, Sydney.
- Fig. 14 Bottle decorated in underglaze blue. Height 54cm. The earliest dated Vietnamese ware, with an inscription corresponding to 1450. Height 54cm. Topkapu Sarayi Museum, Istanbul.





# 14

## Traditions, Acculturation, Renovation: The Evolutional Pattern of Vietnamese Culture

Tran Quoc Vuong

Until her contact with, then enslavement by, Western capitalist colonialism, Vietnam was a bureaucratic-monarchic country with a clear-cut social stratification. At the top stood the KING & MANDARINATE, with the COMMON PEOPLE below. Confucianism was the state and social ideology.

That Confucian bureaucratic-monarchic regime of absolute centralism, which lasted from the beginning of the XVth century to the middle of the XIXth century, was not an authentic product, an endogenous element of the water-rice civilization and village culture of Southeast Asia as a whole. It was an exogenous element originating from North China and introduced in the region of water-rice civilization at the period of Chinese domination, and, as an **irony of history**, received a particular boost from the time Đại Việt shook off the Ming yoke in the beginning of the XV century (1407-1427).

The genuine social product of the cultivation of wet rice was rather the small agricultural villages and hamlets composed of nuclear families, the "husband ploughing, wife transplanting and a buffalo drawing the harrow" type, with the MOTHER and WIFE playing important parts. Its pre-state and proto-state form was made up of a system of local leaders in different regions ("mường"), who could be referred to as "Lạc lords", as opposed to "Lạc people". There was a distinction between "lang" (sir) and "thằng" (fellow), between "nàng" (lady) and "ả" (wench), between aristocrats still maintaining "blood ties" as a ruling instrument and plebeians having lost lineage relations and fragmenting into individual families. In that mandala - as O.W. Wolters put it - of the regime of local leaders, there gradually emerged to the front the role of the "mường luang" (great "mường") leader, who became an overlord, a kind of "pò khun", later referred to in history as King Hùng, with unsophisticated politics, ingenuous customs and no script.

However, after the fall of the Cổ Loa citadel ("Kẻ Chủ") on the bank of the Nam Lương (Dương river), the Việt country and people were harnessed to the expansionist chariot of Chinese dynasties, from Han to T'ang. Vietnam's fate was linked to Chinese civilization - in the form of a by-product, i.e. as a Chinese "district" and "dominion" - throughout more than a thousand years, and still remained so in a geo-political sense in the subsequent thousand years.

From the Xth century onward, Đại Việt was already very different

from Việt Âu and Việt Lạc before the Chinese arrival, although she always retained a Việt constant, manifest in the substratum of water-  
rice culture in villages and hamlets, with a substratum of Việt language  
and ancient Việt myths and legends which were recalled and recorded in  
Việt Điện U Linh and Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái (XIVth century) and, later on,  
historicized by Ngô Sĩ Liên in his Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư (XVth  
century).

The history of Chinese domination was not that of a great liberal  
poet, but like a great, severe and stern teacher who taught the ancient  
Việt slave to know his Chinese master with his qualities and defects as  
well. The Việts learned Han characters to compose odes in Han genre and  
poems according to T'ang prosody ... and, in the era of Sovereignty,  
strove even harder in this way to prove that they were "in no way  
inferior to the Chinese". But above all, they had to learn politics -  
Han-T'ang ideology, with its administrative-political structure taking  
"absolute royal power (autocracy)" as the basic principle - so as to  
"hoist the master on his own petard" and eventually wrest back sover-  
eignty in the Xth century. Thus the Việts became expert in the art of  
surviving next door to the biggest empire on the globe.

Our ancestors' foreign policy in wartime consisted in "putting the  
aggressors to rout", so that they learned to know that "the mountains  
and rivers of the South belong to the emperor of the South" (Lý Thường  
Kiệt, XIth century); that "the mountains and rivers have been delimited  
sharply North from South", "each country being governed by its own  
emperor" (Nguyễn Trãi, XVth century); and that aggressors will be beaten  
till they have no conveyance left to bring them back, no bit of armour  
left, so that history knows that the heroic South is a sovereign  
country" (Quang Trung, XVIIIth century).

The foreign policy of "fictive vassalage, real independence" in  
time of peace was carried out from the time of Khúc Thừa Dụ (Xth  
century) and further perfected until Quang Trung (XVIIIth century).

The Chinese ruling circles have never given up their dream of  
expansion to Vietnam to bring her within the Chinese orbit. Since the  
Xth Century, Vietnam has had enough spirit, intelligence, energy and  
effective strength to oppose the Chinese forces. That spirit, that  
intelligence, matured through a thousand years of Chinese domination and  
anti-Chinese resistance. It was rooted in the deep belief of the Việts  
in their own style of life and own culture, that they are not Chinamen,  
that they need not become Chinamen ("we bathe ourselves in our own  
pond", we are no fools to "carry gold to dump into Ngô (rivers)").

The Chinese rule fostered in the Vietnamese ruling circles a strong  
receptivity to the influence of Chinese orthodox culture. That is a  
historical fact. On the other hand, it also generated popular opposi-  
tion to China, the tendency towards de-sinicization and nationalization  
of Vietnamese culture.

This brought about in Vietnam a **cultural dualism**, a dilemma between  
the national system of reference and the Chinese one. The conception of  
"imperial power" in Vietnam more and more referred to and relied on  
Chinese classics and etiquettes, more and more followed Chinese models.  
However, in the first days of independence, the behaviour of the kings  
of the Đinh-Lê dynasties (Xth century) still bore many hues peculiar to  
local military leaders, to Pò Khuns; they did not originate from  
families which adopted Chinese imperial creeds. They still kept up the

behaviour of a recalcitrant yet intelligent peasant who had mastered the art of surviving next door to China.

This was also true of the Lý-Trần dynasties (XIth-XIVth centuries). The first king of the Lý dynasty spent his childhood in a pagoda, and stepped up to the throne from the status of a military leader. The first Trần king, coming from a fishing family in the coastal area, brought to Thăng Long (Hanoi) the liberalism and broadmindedness of the coast-dweller, which is in conflict with the rigidity of Confucianism.

Those two dynasties built up a tradition of Buddhist monarchy similar to their Southeast Asian neighbours, more affected by influences of Indian civilization than China. Initial efforts of this kind can be found in the short Vạn Xuân dynasty of Lý Nam Đế (VIth century) and in Lý Bí and Lý Phật Tử (son of Buddha rather than "son of Heaven"). Meantime, the Sung-Ming dynasties were elaborating the tradition of neo-Confucian monarchy. That was what made the difference as regards the ideology of government between Đại Việt in the Lý-Trần era and China in the Sung-Yuan-Ming period. Moreover, the Trần kings were fully conscious of that difference, of the non-necessity to pattern themselves after the T'ang-Sung model (in the words of kings Minh Tông and Nghệ Tông). Nguyễn Trãi, a Trần descendant on the mother's side, and the hyphen joining the Trần and Lê dynasties in the middle of the XIVth and XVth centuries, was no less conscious of that difference between China and Đại Việt, between "North" and "South", with regard not only to territory but also to customs and habits.

So, at the beginning of the XVth century, the conscience of Vietnam drew a line of demarcation, on both the political and cultural planes, between Vietnam and China.

To be sure, Đại Việt in the Lý-Trần era already possessed some aspects modelled after Chinese political culture. Step by step it fostered the monarchic-bureaucratic regime of Chinese style, producing more and more Confucian scholars, building the Temple of Literature and, from the time of King Lý Thái Tông (mid-XIth century), introducing the cult of Confucius (of course at a lesser degree than that of Buddha in pagodas). It also organized more and more Confucian exams, considering this as one of many ways to form and recruit talent.

"Modelling after China" was a historic necessity, because of the "connection" with China throughout ten centuries or so of Chinese domination, and because of the constant pressure - whether implicit or explicit - from China after the Xth century, notwithstanding the independent development of life in Vietnam. Vietnam, whatever she undertook, had always to keep a watchful eye Northward. China was colossal, Vietnam small. Imitating China - to prove herself "not inferior to it", "not different from it" as "civilized" as it, and, therefore, needing no Chinese rule - that was the *modus vivendi* chosen by Vietnam.

The Vietnamese did not care so much about borrowing particular forms of poetry, theatre, etc. from China, but instead concerned themselves much more with expressing the Vietnamese mentality through those forms. Hồ Quý Ly - a great reformer of Vietnam in the late XIVth century - certainly did not like Han-T'ang ways, and even less neo-Confucianism. However, in his reply poem to the envoy of the Ming, who were then threatening to attack Vietnam, he had to state:

You ask how this country of the South gets along?  
In our country, the customs are fine.

The rites - as in the Han time  
The ceremonials as in the T'ang dynasty.

This reply was held to be "arrogant" because it dared to compare Đại Việt with China. The same was true of the savant Lê Quý Đôn of the XVIIIth century. His poetry and prose not only shone with erudition, but also radiated an ardent patriotism and national pride. He strove to prove that Vietnam "is not inferior to China" by instancing evidence that Vietnam "is not different from China". That was a misconstruction, of course, but a comprehensible one.

Chinese influences were strongly perceived in the domain of political power, in the administrative apparatus and penal code, and in science and literature. Chinese characters - not the Chinese language - were used in administrative and scientific papers in the same manner as Latin in medieval Europe. The upper classes in Vietnam also accepted the concept of Chinese-style patriarchal families, considering it an ideal basis on which to build and organize the society. This idea penetrated the Vietnamese society, but merely as an ideal, and was only partly carried out among the upper and middle classes. It was inadequate to the actual Vietnamese family, built on the basis of a water-rite civilization and through practical struggle against foreign aggression, in which the mother and wife played a part, if not greater, then no less important than that of the father and husband - in other words, a kind of "bicephalic" family.

It must be noted that many officials in the Lý and Trần dynasties were illiterate or received only rudiments of Chinese characters, and took their mothers' family name (instead of their fathers'); also that the kinship system of the Trần royal family was a Malay system (including possible obligatory marriage between first cousins), not a Chinese one.

The XVth century is the landmark delimiting two different periods of Chinese influence in Vietnam. Prior to the XVth century, Chinese influence in the cultural-social and even political fields was not yet deeply marked. The Xth century was followed by a period of national regeneration and cultural renaissance. National deities or spirits who had been preserved through the Chinese domination in villages and hamlets, in the realm of popular culture, were reintroduced, somewhat improved, in the cultural life of the royal court (singing, games, religious festivals ...). At this time the cultural dichotomy between royal court and common people was not yet distinct. Vietnam's own language and recollection of a pre-Chinese civilization and era were recorded and revised with a confronting sense of not being inferior to China.

Many legendary cultural heroes and heroines in the struggle against Chinese domination were recognized and apotheosized by the monarchic state, which set up or enlarged temples to worship them. They provided an inexhaustible source of inspiration to trace the nation's origin and real identity.

Old influences of Indian culture, via the cult of Indra and the two deities of the Sun and the Moon in the Lý dynasty, as well as new ones from the cultures of Champa and Chen La - those eminent non-Chinese cultures - constituted a counterweight to Chinese culture, whose effect was to neutralize the influence of Chinese civilization and enhance Vietnam's own peculiar identity. The Lý and Trần dynasties preferred

Champa's music, choreography and architecture to China's.

The Lý-Trần Buddhist monarchy tended toward CLEMENCY, HUMANITY, BENEVOLENCE...., hence the relationship between court (king and mandarin) and people was not so distant as in later days. Between state and village there was a relationship of cooperation and mutual concession, the state still abstaining from meddling too deeply with village affairs and villagers' beliefs. The **Đình** (communal house) and the tutelary genii had not yet come into being as permanent witnesses of the influence of the court on the village. All this enabled the court to mobilize large numbers to join in resistance against the Sung and Yuan-Mongol aggressors (which were real people's wars).

Those cultural-social realities made the Lý and Trần dynasties refuse to see in neo-Confucianism and Chinese civilization a great "force of attraction". The Lý kings, spontaneously devoted to Buddhism and Taoism, did nothing to favour Confucianism, yet did not ostracize it either. As a matter of fact, in the court as well as among the population, there existed a kind of religious syncretism - an expression of Vietnamese religious tolerance. Not until the end of the Lý dynasty did some Confucians criticize the "evils" of Buddhist circles, but even under the Trần dynasty the influence of Buddhism remained strong and indeed was strengthened with the appearance of the Trúc Lâm-Yên Tử Zen sect. In the Trần dynasty, Confucians grew influential, especially in the final period. They were vocally critical of Buddhism and proposed cultural-social-political reforms in the line of Confucian monarchism. The promoters were disciples of the Chu Văn An school (end of XIVth century).

However, the Trần kings, while using those "white-faced scholars", did not yet appoint them to important posts. They knowingly checked the excessive influence of Confucianism, being always devoted to Buddhism and fond of unsophisticated country life. Clearly, prior to the XVth century, beside Chinese influences, there existed a strong tendency to de-Sinicize Vietnamese culture.

The situation was quite different following twenty years under Ming rule (1407-1427), two decades of genocide by the Ming aggressors, of attempted re-Sinicization of Vietnam on the cultural, social and political planes. The **Đại Việt** cultural patrimony was savagely drained, with the perfectly conscious intention of assimilation and ethnocide. The movement of national liberation was strong enough to shake off Ming rule. However, the cultural-social legacies of Ming domination were quite heavy, lasting much longer than the aftermath of war and physical destruction.

Vietnamese Buddhism and Taoism were wrecked. In the Lê royal court, neo-Confucianist ideology won supremacy. That was the decisive transition to a regime of Confucianist monarchy, or rather, **neo-Confucianist** monarchy. The first **History of Đại Việt** of the Lê dynasty (1475) was written from this neo-Confucianist viewpoint.

Many Chinese political, social and cultural institutions were introduced to Vietnam not during the period of Chinese domination, but only from the XVth century, by the Lê, and later the Lê-Trịnh-Nguyễn monarchic regimes. These institutions included the "Nine families" system, family rites, funeral rites **à la chinoise** (the Khúc and Lý had mourned their parents for a few days or months only), and village tutelary genii **à la chinoise**. Instructions by the king about loyalty to the sovereign and filial piety (Twenty-four Teachings of King Lê Thánh

Tông, Decalogue of King Minh Mạng) were disseminated. Villagers were then ordered to assemble to learn them, hence the origin of the **Đình Làng** (communal house). Meanwhile, the **chèo** and other forms of folk culture were banished from the court and from official festivals, to be replaced by Ming-imitation music. The cultural dichotomy was now clear, divorcing the court from the people. The court was inclined to turn its back on folklore and to show a northward tendency ("People of the south turning towards the north"). The Dragon - monadic symbol of royal power - also changed. If the **Lý** dragon did not resemble the Sung one, then the **Lê** dragon more and more copied the Ming one, just as the **Lê** kings imitated the Ming kings.

To be sure, the first kings of the **Lê** dynasty, having risen from a national liberation movement of the masses, had to take due account of popular aspirations (e.g. allocation of public land) and effect a certain de-sinicization (the **Hồng Đức** code included articles which reflected popular customs). However, generally speaking, the **Lê** dynasty, with its tendency towards absolutism and its Sinic propensities, soon became unpopular. Less than a hundred years after its foundation, it declined and then collapsed, marking the failure of the model of neo-Confucianist monarchy.

A new dynasty, the **Mạc**, whose founder also came from a fishing family as had the first **Trần** king, took succession in **Thăng Long**. The **Mạc** dynasty also needed to use Confucian ideology and the bureaucratic intelligentsia as means to structure the ruling apparatus over the sea of peasantry. But it was not so harsh towards Buddhism and Taoism as its **Lê** dynasty predecessor. Buddhism and Taoism regenerated somewhat, although their golden age had vanished for good. The situation at court, as well as among the masses, grew more "breathable" than under the **Lê**, when Confucianism was paramount. The **Mạc** rulers equally loathed the rigid, traditional, Confucian-inspired "prize agriculture, disfavour trade" economic line. Originally a coastal fisherman, the **Mạc** founder broad-mindedly authorized the opening of markets, the development of mountain valleys, coastal areas, and communications. This constituted a stimulus for the development of agriculture and handicrafts, especially ceramics. Many ceramic articles of the **Mạc** period bear the date of production and the names of the purchaser and the producer, to some extent reflecting a respect for individual rights and creativity.

This behaviour began to deviate from the path of absolute monarchism, which denied all individual personality save the sovereign's. With the **Mạc** dynasty dawned the material and moral possibilities for a fundamental transformation of Vietnamese society.

Unfortunately, this progressive trend did not last long. **Mạc**'s reforms were not thorough. The business sector which was likely to support him remained flimsy. The conservative Confucian intelligentsia and the bureaucratic forces deprived of their prerogatives gathered in the highlands of **Thanh Hóa** under the "Restore the **Lê** dynasty" banner. From the XVIIth century onward, the regime of Confucian monarchy grew even more unbearable, and though bereft of vitality, it still lingered on for two more centuries. A hurricane of insurrections and jacqueries, climaxing in the **Tây Sơn** movement (1771-1789), eventually swept away the **Lê-Trịnh** reign. The XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries saw the full bloom of popular culture, **Nôm** literature, popular sculpture... It was the heyday of Vietnamese folklore.

Grown in the Red River basin, near China, to which it had been related for ages, the Vietnamese cultural-social tree, though rooted in Southeast Asia, had its top, branches and foliage verging rather toward East Asia. Under the Lê-Trịnh reign, the region of northern Vietnam lay already on the boundary between the two worlds of East and Southeast Asia. In the course of their southward advance, stretching to the Mekong delta, the people of southern Vietnam under the Nguyễn lords got nearer Southeast Asia and farther from China; Confucianism less directly affected the villages. It was a golden opportunity to further de-Sinicize Vietnamese culture, firm up a seaward orientation, absorb more cultural elements from the sea, and further diversify the Vietnamese economy and culture.

Unfortunately, Nguyễn power in the South, consolidated after the Trịnh-Nguyễn civil war (1627-1672), began to degenerate very rapidly at the beginning of the XVIIIth century. It, too, returned to the model of Confucian monarchy, leaned towards absolutism, "prized agriculture, disfavoured trade", and had no new ideas to offer. The court remained as conservative as ever, while the people grew more liberal-minded...

Eventually, the unpopular Confucian monarchy of the Nguyễns broke down before Western capitalist colonialism. A possessor of high academic credentials at the beginning of the XXth century commented bitterly:

Holder of an academic degree, yet slave of the French,  
All this because our Confucian scholar learns Chinese.

History ushered in for Vietnamese culture a new period of acculturation and renovation on the basis of popular traditions. That is the dawn of Vietnam's national-modern culture in the middle of the XXth century, a subject going beyond the area of discussion of this paper.

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# 15

## Symbolism of Kingship in Arakan

Pamela Cutman

The kings of the obscure "Indianized" states of Arakan shared with their grander counterparts in Asia the need to explicate the link between their temporal position and the cosmological justification of their power. Their "oriental despotism" classically depended on the capability to control water. The agricultural base of the capitals from the 4th to the 18th centuries, the deltaic plains of the Kaladan and Lemro rivers, was swamped with water during the wet season but was dry for half the year. Surplus production could be maintained only through centralized water retention and drainage systems. The importance of a continued water supply is, naturally, the central motif of royal symbolism. The king's law, his *dharma*, was explained in terms of the cosmic law which guides the cycle of the seasons and guarantees fertility and prosperity.

While this theme has been explored time and again in Southeast Asian studies, two interesting illustrations show localized adaptation of Indian models: an inscribed stone with possible megalithic precedents, which had great significance for at least four dynasties between the 5th and 16th centuries, and remains important today, and two sculptures which we postulate represent Indra, king of the gods and bestower of water, whose celebrations are central to the Arakanese and Burmese new year festivities.

### The Shitthaung Pillar

The city of Mrohaung (Ar. Mrauk-Ū), founded in 1430, was the last in a series of capitals along the Kaladan river, dating from around the 5th century. The Kaladan gives easy access to the Bay of Bengal, and the Arakanese capitals variously exhibit Gupta, Pallava, Pala and Moghul influence, although the impact of the Pyu and Mon-Burman cultures of Burma proper is also apparent.

The Shitthaungpara (Shrine of the Eighty Thousand Images)[1] was erected by King Minbin, (Sīrisuriyacandramahādhammarāja, fl. 1531-1553), twelfth king of the Mrauk-Ū dynasty, with the assistance of Bengali and Portuguese architects and engineers. Both a fortress and a pagoda, its purpose was to serve as a place of refuge for the royal family and retainers. By the time of its erection, the threat from both the Dutch and the Portuguese was very real, Mrauk-Ū

being, in the words of the Viceroy of Goa "both rich and weak, and therefore desirable". To the left hand of the entrance to the north side is a square stone pillar, rising to a height of 3.3 m from the socket, each side measuring 0.7 m across. Three sides are covered with inscriptions, all apparently **praśastis**, written at distinctively different periods of the country's history.

The earliest inscription, on the east face, is now almost illegible. The language is Sanskrit, the script closely resembling that of the early 6th century copper plates of Bengal.

The next, on the west face, in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit can be dated to the first half of the 8th century, both through the script, which compares with the 8th century copper plates of east Bengal, and by a reference to gifts sent to the "noble congregation of monks in the land of King Silamegha", i.e. Aggabodhi IV of Ceylon. Several series of dynasties are described, the last two of which can be verified from other data, notably inscribed coins. The north face, again largely illegible, can be dated palaeographically to around the middle of the 11th century, by comparison with Bengal epigraphs. The name of a king also known through coins is mentioned, as is Yaksapura, an old name of the Mon capital of Thaton captured by Aniruddha of Pagan in 1057.

The material used is fine-grained red sandstone, common at the earliest urban site, Dhaññavati (mid 4th to 6th centuries) and in the earlier phases of the successor city, Vesālī (7th to 12th centuries).

Once opposite the pillar, but now lying nearby, is an octagonal red sandstone column, described by Forchhammer in 1891 as 2.7 m high above the ground, but probably originally slightly higher. Towards the apex there is a band of decoration consisting of an enclosed row

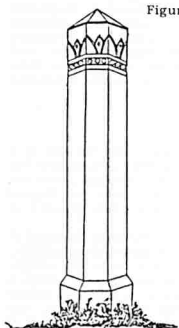


Figure 1

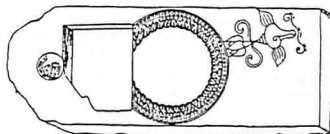


Figure 2

of dots and a double lotus-petal motif, with a major petal at each of the eight corners (Figure 1).

Close to the pillar lies a large red sandstone slab, 3.6 m long, 1.5 m broad and 0.3 m thick, broken at one end. At the unbroken end, depicted in relief, is a wavy line suggestive of water, from which rises a right-voluted winged conch shell with a lotus flower growing from the aperture, the tip of the petals touching the outer edge of an ornately carved wheel, its outer rim enclosing a circle of dots, and the inner rim comprising a double lotus petal motif. The design suggests the fertility and prosperity (lotus) which arises from the waters (waves and conch) when the **cakravartin** monarch (wheel) holds sway (Figure 2). These motifs are common not only in ancient Arakanese art but from Pyu, Dvāraṭī and Oc-Eò sites. I have discussed their significance elsewhere.[2]

At the upper end of the wheel is a square hole sunk into the stone, 0.13 m deep, with sides a little over 0.7 m long; next follows a circular cup-like hole 0.1 m deep and 0.15 m in diameter, while the reverse of the stone shows only a rough-hewn surface. As the sides of the inscribed pillar also measure 0.7 m, Forchhammer suggested that the stone slab (which must have been 6 to 7 m long, but is broken off above the cup-like hollow) was originally a lintel or architrave: the square hole capped the inscribed pillar which formed the left hand post of the entrance gate; the circular hollow received the revolving axis of a swinging door; the portion of the lintel exhibiting the **dharma**, the lotus and the conch protruded over the north side of the inscribed pillar to counterbalance the weight of the opposite part of the slab (now broken off) which formed the actual lintel over the entrance, and the octagonal pillar constituted the right hand post of the entrance. The construction of the gate (Skt. **torāṇa**) forcibly calls to mind the "turning of the wheel of the law", the essential function of the Buddhist **cakravartin** king, to whom was given the power to regulate the celestial and terrestrial forces in order to control the coming of the rains which would ensure the continuing prosperity of the kingdom. Hence, the **cakra** of the lintel was depicted as merging into the pillar on which, as we will see, the continuing **dharma** of the Arakanese **cakravartin** kings was recorded.

The form of the pillar on the opposite side also has some significance. In common with other pillars associated with **cakravartin** kingship, it is eight-sided, symbolizing the eight directions of the microcosmic country and the macrocosmic universe.[3] The decoration around the upper portion is identical to that of the **cakra** on the lintel, the lotus petal in each corner suggesting that the beneficial effect of the royal **dharma** was to be felt in each of the eight directions of the kingdom.

This symbolism, implicit in Indian notions of kingship, was to become explicit in Southeast Asia, where power was not supported by a complex class and caste structure, but needed to be more fully justified in terms of the production of wealth.

There is no way of ascertaining whether the column and lintel were made at the time when the pillar was first inscribed. The use of red sandstone for all three parts, however, suggests a date before the middle of the 7th century, after which this material was only rarely used in Arakan. It is possible that the column and lintel, together with the pillar, were moved from capital to capital, their significance

still remembered in the 16th century when Minbin had it erected at his royal shrine.

The inscribed pillar can be inferred to have had a legitimizing function for the ruling dynasty. The erection of such a stone, specifically to record the institution of kingship, may have its foundation in an older megalithic tradition, where the upright stone represented not only the ancestors but also the wealth of the man who erected it.

Each of the three inscriptions appears to have been written at a period of stress, when the country was under pressure from outside, and, in the west face at least, the continuing power of the royal law was emphasized. From the same inscriptions it is clear that the descent of the ruling line (subject in all cultures to a multitude of hazards) was not considered as important as the claim to sovereignty of the king himself. The relationship of one ruler to his predecessor is only noted by the author of the west face, Anandacandra, who himself could produce only a royal father and grandfather. More important is the emphasis laid on the continuation of the royal **dharma**. By implication, therefore, the erection, and possibly the inscription, of the pillar were part of an ancient mystical tradition intimately connected with the function of the king and the well-being of the country. Minbin, by erecting the ancient **torāṇa** at the side of his fortress-shrine most likely to be attacked by the Portuguese, was continuing the tradition of a millennium.

### **Cakra-stambhas**

Two early Arakanese sculptures adopt an individual iconographic form derived from Mathuran and Gupta prototypes and connected with the Mon art of Dvāravatī, but unparalleled elsewhere. Conceived in the round, they were originally placed on columns, suggesting that they may have been the focus of a circumambulation ritual.

**Plate 1:** The first, found at Mindra-byin village, between Mrohaung and Lemro, is contained within an oval slab, broken below and carved on both sides. The obverse has a male figure standing in a **tribhaṅga** (three bend) pose, the right hand, raised to shoulder height, carrying an oval object on a stalk. There is evidence of a high headdress, and the usual royal ornaments and garments are worn, together with a scarf tied round the hips and looped at the right in characteristic Gupta fashion. Gupta influence is also seen in the rows of tight ringlets behind the headdress, the prominent **trivali** marks around the neck, and in the soft modelling of the flesh. The figure is contained within a sixteen-spoked oval wheel with a plain rim encompassing the entire backslab. The reverse has the other side of the wheel, rendered in an identical fashion, but in place of the figure the hub has an oval beaded border, from within which a lotus rhizome is seen to emerge, extruding to the top of the sculpture. The costume and the quality of the carving may indicate a date in the 6th century.

**Plate 2:** A later image from the old city of Veśālī, partly reconstructed and recently painted (!) stands in an awkward **tribhaṅga** pose, left hand on left hip, both feet pointing right. The right hand is raised to shoulder-level, and carries a spoked wheel on a stalk,

similar to the object carried by the previous figure. The short, chubby body has been carefully but crudely contoured. A short shirt falls from the hips to the knee, gathered and tied in the front and draped to show the form of the legs beneath. The backslab is again conceived as a sixteen-spoked wheel. Behind, a repeated abstract design rises from the base. The lower portion of the base itself is square in cross-section, with a rounded moulding in front, and a row of globules suggesting a stylized lotus throne behind. The transition to the upper base is achieved by a series of square mouldings giving rise to a square platform with an abstract leaf design rising from each corner. Between these emerges the high cylindrical platform of the image in front, and the leaf design at the back. Too narrow to support the weight of the image proper, the shape of the base indicates that it was mounted on a pillar.

The posture of the figure, the wheel reredos and vegetation-ornamented reverse show a direct continuation of the iconography of the other image. In the absence of any direct Indian influence in its execution, we might place it some time after the 8th century inscription on the west face of the Shittaug pillar, after which time Indian influence declined for some four centuries and local elements became more prevalent.

The stance of both figures is that of a **cakravartin** raising his hand to the clouds from which wealth (often in the form of a shower of gold coins, but originally water to ensure plentiful crops) was believed to fall. He is depicted thus in a Mathuran free-standing image, also with a vegetal motif on the reverse, and on Gupta **stambhas** of the 4th and 5th centuries, where adorsed figures in identical **cakravartin** posture, with a surmounting **cakra** were placed on a square base upon a pillar.[4]

The figure in both images can tentatively be identified as Indra. The object held in the hand of the earlier figure is also held by Indra in Ajanta cave paintings, and might be a form of Indra's **vajra**. The spoked wheel on a pole, held by the later figure, is a **cakra-dhvaja**, depicted on Gupta coins being held by kings (Figure 3).[5] Both are connected with the concept of the king as rain bringer.

The Mahayanist **Suvarṇabhasottamasūtra**, [6] for instance, states that the Turner of the Wheel of the Supreme Law (i.e. the **cakravartin**)



Figure 3:  
Coins of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, circa 400 AD (Agrawala, fig 54).

is entitled to raise the great banner of the Law, and thus causes the supreme great rain of the Law to fall.

The combination of elements illustrated in these sculptures: the king of the gods and the burgeoning lotus, symbol of water, contained within the solar wheel, and a square base mounted on a column, represents, like the so-called Aśokan pillars, the Indo-Aryan concept of the cyclic course of universal life, and ultimately derives from Vedic literature. After Indra had slain the demon Vṛta, thus releasing the waters, he separated heaven and earth by erecting the great Stay, or pillar, creating space, and the sun rose for the first time, creating time. Indra thereby became the divine king, setting in motion the cosmic cycle which made order out of chaos. Creation was thus seen as a daily occurrence, for, as the sun's path was prepared by the cosmic Stay, or pillar separating heaven and earth, it was exactly at midday when the sun united with the summit of the pillar. It was at this moment that the sun, through the pillar, interacted with the waters to produce life on earth. By the same logic, every earthly king ruled by divine right of Indra, who was the supreme source of **dharma**, the external cosmic law.[7]

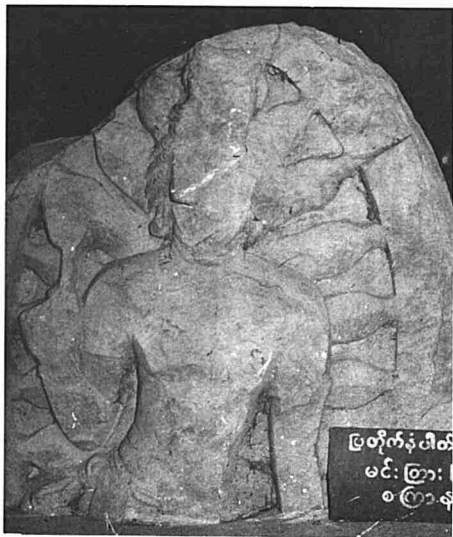
Irwin has shown that the "Aśokan" pillars illustrate the function of the **cakravartin** king. The Gupta emperors, in their emulation of Aśokan imperialism, adapted Aśokan symbolism. Aśokan ideals of **cakravartin** kingship as preserved in Buddhist literature became the model for later Buddhist kingship in India, Ceylon and Southeast Asia.[8]

The worship of Indra came into being when India was tribal or semi-tribal. Aśoka combined this earlier tradition with concepts of imperial sovereignty, taken from the Achaemenid example, expressed in the pillars he reused or erected.[9] While in the Gupta period Indra's popularity lost ground to Viṣṇu, who absorbed many of his characteristics, the Arakanese kings (and their counterparts to the east) favoured the earlier tradition, which had more in common with their aspirations to unite the kingdom by force of a **dharma** which would, through control of the waters, guarantee fertility and prosperity.

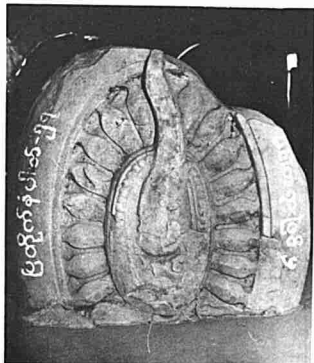
The descent of Indra to earth at the beginning of the wet season is still seen to herald the start of the new year. As Thagyamin, king of the **nats**, he may wield various symbols of his power indicating to the astrologers the shape of the year to come: a spear, when there will be disturbances in the land, a water jar, when the rains will be abundant and the crops good, a torch, or a simple staff.[10] This persistence of selected aspects of an old Indian imperialist tradition with appropriate innovations is yet another example of "localization" during the period under discussion in this Symposium.

## NOTES

1. The Shitthaungpara was first noticed by Forchhammer in his *Papers on Subjects Relating to the Archaeology of Burma* (Rangoon, 1891), pp.20 ff. On the inscriptions, see *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report, 1925-26*, pp.146-48; and the *Report of the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Burma, 1925-26*, pp.27-30 and 59-60; E.H. Johnston, "Some Sanskrit Inscriptions of Arakan", in *BSOAS*, X, 1 (1944); D.C. Sircar, "Inscriptions of the Candras of Arakan", *Epigraphica India*, XXXII; and P. Gutman, *Ancient Arakan*, Vol.1 (PhD thesis, ANU, 1977), pp.24 ff.
2. "Ancient Coinage of Southeast Asia", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol.66, Part I (January 1978), pp.8-21.
3. See J. Irwin, "Aśokan Pillars; a reassessment of the evidence", *The Burlington Magazine* (London), Vols 115-18 (1973-76); H. Shorto, "The 32 Myos in the Medieval Mon Kingdom", *BSOAS*, XXVI (1963), p.589 suggested that similar octagonal steles found at various archaeological sites in Burma may be *indakhilas* marking the centre of a city.
4. A.K. Coomaraswamy, "A Royal Gesture and Some Other Motifs", *Feestbundel K. Bataviaasch Genootschap Van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, I, 1929; J.Ph. Vogel, "La Sculpture de Mathura", *Ars Asiatica*, XV (Paris, 1930), pl. XXXIX. The identity of the Gupta figures has been a matter of conjecture. Considering the present evidence they must be closely connected with the *cakravartin* concept. Cf. J.C. Harle, *Gupta Sculpture* (Oxford, 1974), pp.38, 40 and pls 23 and 24; P.K. Agrawala, "A Note on the so-called Surya statute from Pawaya", *Bull. of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology*, No.11 (1968); Joanna Williams, "The Sculpture at Mandasor", *Archives of Asian Art*, XXVI (1972-3), p.52.
5. R.S. Gupte and B.C. Mahajan, *Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad Caves* (Bombay, 1962), pl. H. Ajanta Cave no 17, "Indra flying down to earth to put Vishvantara to the test"; V.S. Agrawala, *The Wheel Flag of India: Chakra-Dhvaja* (Varanasi, 1964), fig.54.
6. R.E. Emmerick, *The Sutra of Golden Light, Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol.XXVII (London, 1970), p.36.
7. Irwin, *op.cit.*, *passim*.
8. Cf. E. Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Background to the Burmese Revolution* (The Hague, 1965), pp.33 ff; J. Przyłuski, *La legende de l'empereur Açoka* (Paris, 1923), pp.vii, 9, 59, 110, 167.
9. J. Irwin, "The True Chronology of the Aśokan Pillars", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol.XLIV, 4 (1983), p.264.
10. Shway Yoe, *The Burman, His Life and Notions* (London, 1910), p.348.



(a) Obverse showing Indra within a cakra.



(b) Reverse showing a lotus rhizome emerging from the cakra hub.



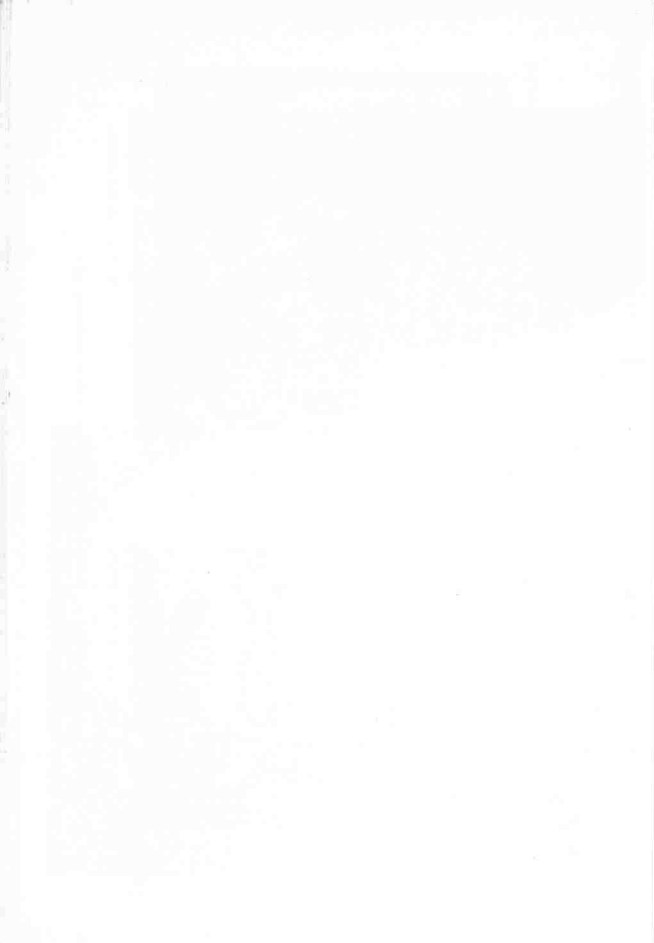


(a) Obverse: Indra with cakra-dhvaja,  
within cakra.



(b) Reverse: leaf motif within the cakra.

PLATE II. Cakra-stambha capital from Shwèdaung-gyi



## Buddhism in Champa

Ian Mabbett\*

One of the most often-met ideas in the history of "Indianized" South-East Asia is that of "adaptation" to the genius of local or "indigenous" cultures. It is impossible to turn many printed pages on the subject without coming across an appeal to this notion of cultural adaptation as an explanation of the change suffered by some rite, cult, doctrine, style, science or institution from one place to another.

So far as it goes, this is all to the good. Local South-East Asian cultures are not mere characterless departments of monolithic and undifferentiated civilizations with their hearts in Benares, or Bodhgaya, or Mecca, or Changan. On the contrary, it often happens, as O.W. Wolters has recently pointed out with finesse, that imported cultural elements "retreat" into the native soil of the host civilizations.[1] Champa offers good examples of the process. One need look no further than Paul Mus' paper on India and Champa: Hindu divinities have melted into, fused with, the *stelae* called *kut* which distil local magic forces. The god Indra is misremembered by latter-day Chams as the folk hero Yan In.[2] But there is still a dimension missing, and, until it is supplied, the cultural history of the region will remain, at best, incomplete.

What is already well recognized is the way in which different societies may differ from each other, each tempting us to treat it as an undifferentiated "personality" for the purpose of contrasting it with others. The missing dimension, on the other hand, is the one that spans the range of cultural activities within a single society.

To understand this dimension, we must distinguish between the raw material of "culture" and the types of activities which embody and express it. To put the matter at its simplest, a single cultural motif or idea may be embodied in one activity in one society and in another activity in another society. The difference in activity does not of itself constitute a difference in style and personality between the two societies. They may have much the same range of activities.

In the mouth of the Buddha, we might say, Buddhism was a soteriological activity. Under Aśoka, it was political: it served to legitimize an emperor's programme. In eighth century Bengal, it furnished tantric magic practices. (This is an over-simplification, but it will serve.) At each transformation, Buddhism was adapted to a new social rôle, not to the local personality of a different society. There

was political legitimization in the Buddha's day, but it was the brahmins, not his disciples, who supplied it. There were magic practices in Aśoka's day, but he disapproved of them.

An imported cultural motif or idea may be adapted to any of a wide range of activities or social roles. To understand the adaptation, it is not enough to measure the change that has taken place; we must also plot the input in its new context of cultural activities. A religious idea, for example, may be adapted to serve many purposes: palace cult, established orthodoxy, regional or local cult, family or ancestor cult, funerary ritual, mountain god cult, saint or hero cult, soil and fertility cult, animism of nature spirits, adoration of great gods, apotropaic magic and sorcery, astrology and divination, witchcraft, folk myths and legends, scholarly philosophy and metaphysics, shamanism, or soteriological techniques. These types of religious activity may be ordered by various polarities within a culture: they may be perceived as "inside" (indigenous) or "outside" (exotic); they may be "higher" (Great Tradition) or "lower" (Little Tradition); they may be bent to the service of personal gods or impersonal principles that are religious only in a loose sense.

When cults and beliefs interact, various mechanisms may operate. One mechanism may be called **politicization** or **compression**. When a culture becomes self-conscious, seeing its beliefs as one set among many rather than as axiomatic, taken for granted, these beliefs may be welded together, however disparate in type and origin, and set up as a sort of community ideology in the face of a threatening outside world - the "Confucian way of life", for example. A second is the **elevation of the "low" to the "high"**, when urban society grows out of a simpler environment, or when an agrarian region secedes from a kingdom and evolves its own court culture. A third is **emulation**, when disparate local cults organize themselves and take on a pattern imitating the structure of a new and rival "high" culture, as for example Bön in Tibet imitated Buddhism, inverting some of its rituals. A fourth is **establishment**, whereby almost any sort of cult may be adopted officially by a ruler who patronises it. This changes its nature; an originally soteriological cult, for example, may acquire temples and priests and forget its original purpose. A fifth is **syncretism**, which is going on all the time. A sixth is **superimposition**, which is the mechanism whereby the royal cult of a kingdom absorbs, and is declared to be equivalent to, all the local cults throughout the realm. (In Cambodia, the palace Buddhist cult of Jayavarman VII absorbed local deities in the Bayon.)

It is such mechanisms as these that should be sought when we try to analyse the transmission of Buddhism through any stage of its remote and tortuous peregrinations. It did not merely take on the colouration of local cultures; it also performed different rôles in different times and places. At least arguably it was in origin a pure technique of salvation. Within the Buddha's lifetime, it became established. With establishment, it began to be syncretized with "Little Tradition" ingredients allied to shaman-type cults and to magic. To the extent that it was a state orthodoxy, it acquired thinkers and writers who made of it a philosophy rather than a practical technique. When it was exported by missionaries, they became bearers of talismanic magic in their persons and in their icons. When it was adopted as an ideology in some kingdoms, it became a

state orthodoxy that was superimposed, and acquired a different set of Little Traditions by syncretism in a new environment.

These general reflections are addressed to the outline of a programme which might in principle be applied to any one place where Buddhism was adopted. In what now follows, the evidence of Buddhism in Champa will be reviewed. It must be admitted at the outset that the evidence is too patchy to test this scheme rigorously or to supply materials for a complete map of Buddhist culture. It does not allow us to speak with confidence of a "popular" Buddhism practised in society at large. But it does allow the inference that the Cham élite participated fully in international Buddhist culture, which thus contributed significantly to the self-definitions and self-perceptions of Cham society during the period with which this symposium is concerned. "Culture" is something lodged in the admirations of an individual, and is both consciously and unconsciously manifested in speech, behaviour, shared lore and standards of judgment. Educated Chams admired and absorbed Buddhism along with Hinduism; it contributed to their cosmopolitanism. That is perhaps the chief point which can be made here. There was vigorous international cultural traffic in South-East Asia; the very vigour of this traffic, perhaps paradoxically, compels us to recognize that at some levels "South-East Asia" was not an important category of self-identification, whereas "the Hindu-Buddhist world" certainly was. At other levels "Champa" or "Indrapura" might be the significant cultural units.

In what follows, the inter-regional contacts which largely determined the course of religious history will be apparent at many points. Restrictions upon the source material available make it impossible to attempt any substantial new research; the present exercise is necessarily in large part a synthesis of current knowledge. A main focus will be on inscriptions, using published sources. The observations which will be offered on art history must lean heavily upon the authority of others, particularly J. Boisselier.[3]

No aspect of the history of the Chams can be fully understood without reference to their environment. They lived in scattered communities that clung to the valleys and coastal plains between the South China Sea and the Annamite Cordillera. Aymonier aptly describes their territory as a country of narrow valleys between sea and mountains.[4] (An atlas published in 1902 has large white areas marked "a little known and very mountainous region".)[5] Between the cultivable patches of lowland where settled peoples are concentrated (first the Chams, now the Vietnamese) and the mountains, there is an abrupt ecological frontier. Gourou contrasts the habitation density of the modern Binh Dinh plains area, 326 per square kilometre, with that of the hill areas, a mere two.[6]

The scattered Cham population can never have been great - certainly not as much as two and a half million, as G. Maspero observed.[7] Nowadays of course, after many centuries of Vietnamese encroachment, the Cham population is very small. The chief concentration is in about eighty villages spread across seven cantons in the south, around Phan Rang and Binh Thuan, about thirty thousand according to figures given in the earlier part of this century, but there are many scattered Cham communities. Some further north, in mountain villages of Phu Yen, speak a purer Cham than do those of Phan Rang. Father G. Moussay, writing in 1971, estimated that there were about

forty thousand Chams in Southern Vietnam concentrated around Phan Rang and Phan Ri, and twenty thousand in remoter areas; in Cambodia there were many more, 150,000 to 200,000. About a third of the Vietnamese Chams, and nearly all the Cambodian ones, were Muslim.[8] The religion of the rest is best described as animism, though there are in it many elements of misremembered Hindu cults; Buddhism, formerly a vital part of Cham religious culture, appears to have disappeared from their consciousness.

The Cham population in early times was sparse and scattered. This may make us think that the Chams were isolated, and lived in autonomous communities. A recent trend in South-East Asian scholarship has been to emphasize the cultural and social self-sufficiency of the local community and the fragility of over-arching political institutions. It would be easy to apply this critique to Champa, whose "capitals", after all, were widely separated settlements on different parts of the coast, which appeared to take it in turn to be hegemon, each hegemony being known to the Chinese by a different name; the control of any one over the others may well have been very weak.

It is not the concern of this paper to explore such issues, but it is worth recording the impression that the isolation of the Chams, whether from each other or from the rest of the world, can easily be exaggerated. On the contrary, Cham culture was highly cosmopolitan. This cosmopolitanism deserves emphasis as it is very germane to religious history, and it has already been emphasized by Paul Mus in his assessment of the sophistication of Cham literate culture.[9]

Even by land, across the mountains, the Chams were in constant communication with their southern and western neighbours. Lines of Cham settlement snaked out through the passes to Laos and Cambodia. An example is where the River Da Rang bends around the Binh Dinh mountains, attested by Cham ruins at Cheo Reo, Yang Prong and Voene Sai.[10] There were Chams in the Bassac area. Trade and cultural influences between Mons, Khmers and Chams are richly attested.

**A fortiori**, the Chams were even less cut off from the traffic of civilization by sea. They may well have arrived in Indochina originally by sea, rather than being a remnant mainland population. Their origin is involved in the vexed problem of "Austronesian" prehistory.[11] In recent times, some prehistorians have found links between Sa Huynh culture (in Vietnam) and Kalanay culture (in the Philippines) as parts of the "Austronesian" complex now often thought to have originated from Taiwan. In this putative southward seaborne migration, the "Austronesians" left their seasonally humid semi-deciduous northern environment, suitable for cereal cultivation, and entered the latitudes of evergreen tropical rainforest which lacks the seasonal rhythms favourable to cereal cultivation. In some areas therefore they abandoned cereals, notably rice, and concentrated more on tubers and fruits. Champa, however, straddles the line between the two zones.[12] The Chams, therefore, lived in a rich environment conducive to a multi-faceted subsistence from sea trade, piracy, fishing, horticulture and agriculture.

This is important. Because we know with hindsight that the Chams were eventually overrun by the Vietnamese, we are tempted to think of their history as a long decline, and of their economy as precariously dependent upon fickle trading relations. We must recognize how very robust Cham society was. Cham Buddhism, like Cham

Hinduism, was nourished by vigorous international cultural traffic, and enjoyed the patronage of rulers and aristocrats who could afford to maintain temples, monasteries and libraries throughout the countryside, fragmented though this countryside may have been.

Without labouring the point, it is worth remembering that the monks and brahmins were supported by an often prosperous agricultural constituency of devotees and taxpayers. Cham farmers grew the famous "floating rice", which can be grown even under a water cover of up to several metres.[13] Cham rice was exported to China, where according to Ho Ping-ti it helped to work a revolution in agriculture. It was obviously grown in Fujian (Fukien) province by the beginning of the eleventh century, for after the drought of 1011-1012, the emperor ordered consignments of the drought-resistant Champa rice to be obtained from Fujian. It was very quick-growing, and was known as "hundred day rice".[14] The history of irrigation in South-East Asia is problematic, but there is little doubt that the Chams eventually took to growing rice under irrigation; traces of their earthworks remain here and there.[15]

Circumstances combined to favour Champa's commercial pre-eminence. The summer monsoon winds assisted seaborne traffic northwards around the coast towards China; from autumn to spring the northerlies made the Cham coast a natural landfall for Yueh or Chinese merchantmen heading for the entrepôts of the archipelago or beyond. Cam Ranh Bay, in the south, has been described as one of the best natural harbours in Asia. Further north, especially between Hue and Quang Tri, a network of lagoons and navigable rivers provide protected waterways for internal communication. Chams handled a broad range of trading commodities, many of them locally available, from gold to slaves.[16] Gold, which made South-East Asia an Eldorado for Indian adventurers in the first two centuries A.D.,[17] was and is mined in Champa. The fifth-century *Linyi Ji* (Lin Yi Ki) refers to a gold mountain, *jin shan* (chin shan 金山), thirty li from Linyi, the old capital near Hue.[18] Nicolo de Conti, one of the early European visitors, went to Champa from Java and reported that it was a major trader in aloes, camphor and gold.[19] A recent reference book for the area says that "Some gold is also mined at Bong Mieu in this same general area" (near Da Nang).[20] Champa was always very active in trade within Asia; Zhou Daguan (Chou Ta-kuan), for example, refers to its imports of textiles from Siam and China, and especially of quality goods from India.[21] Chams were ethnically related to mountain peoples such as the Radé and Jarai, and were able to exploit the upland territories of these peoples for a wide range of forest products which could be profitably exported.

As a cosmopolitan trading power with an agricultural base, Champa was well placed to participate in the cultural traffic of the Buddhist world. One of the remarkable things about South-East Asian cultural history is that countries in the area constantly responded to Indian styles in thought, art and architecture (with whatever local adaptations) with promptitude and sensitivity. Champa's proximity to China also exposed it particularly to cultural influences from that country.

Champa was in a good position, then, to participate in the international traffic in Buddhist culture. How big a part did Buddhism actually play?

Evidence of familiarity with Buddhist thought and the study of Buddhist literature occurs from various periods of Cham history. Back in Linyi times, the conquerer Liu Fang carried off after his invasion in 605 A.D. no fewer than 1,350 works on Buddhism in 564 bundles, written in *kuen luen* language, presumably Cham.[22] Several kings were credited in inscriptions with expert knowledge of Buddhist philosophy among their other accomplishments - Bhadravarman, father of Indravarman III, for example, was said to be proficient in the system of Jinendra (that is, Buddhism), among five other systems of learning,[23] and an inscription of 1167 praised a king for his knowledge of Mahayana.[24] Some individuals, not only monks, showed their piety by taking Buddhist names. Jaya Indravarman II had the posthumous name of Paramabuddhaloka (the practice of taking such names, implying that the deceased has gone to the world - *loka*, *sc. gata* - of the patron deity, is paralleled in Angkor), and a prince elected by dignitaries as ruler after his brother's death in 1081 took the reign-name of Paramabodhisattva.[25]

But there is, of course, a danger that any subject, being examined close to and to the neglect of its context, may come to seem more important than it is. Balance must be restored. Except for a short while around the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries, Buddhism in Champa never really rivalled Hinduism. Epigraphic statistics give some idea of the relative importance of the two faiths, at least in royal and courtly circles: of 130 inscriptions published, 21 are not sectarian, 92 refer to worship of Śiva, 3 are directed to Viṣṇu, 5 to Brahmā, 7 to Buddhism, and 2 to Śiva and Viṣṇu jointly.[26] Roughly similar proportions inhere in the record of religious art, as embodied for example in the subjects illustrated in Jean Boisselier's *La Statuaire du Champa*.

In 1888, Bergaigne offered this judgment: Buddhism remained, "as far as one can judge, in a state of social inferiority in relation to the brahmanical religions".[27] Such an assessment needs to be qualified: the inferiority was quantitative rather than social. Only in one brief period did Buddhism supply the official state cult, but it was always part of the Great Tradition of court culture, as well as the faith of many dedicated monks who met to meditate in halls endowed by wealthy patrons.

Finot sums up the rôle of Buddhism more succinctly and less questionably: it probably had "une influence restreinte".[28] Majumdar says that "Buddhism had also a fairly strong hold on the people".[29] This latter judgment is speculative, though not implausible. In the nature of the case, it is very difficult to determine how widespread any particular religious allegiance was among the population as a whole, as opposed to the world of the great men attested by historical sources. We must remember this as we turn to the evidences of successive historical periods.

The historical record of Buddhism in Champa needs to begin with the fragmentary and often obscure testimony of foreign sources. (To be sure, it was long thought, following the lead of L. Finot,[30] that there was evidence of Buddhism in the celebrated inscription of Vo Canh in Khanh Hoa, near Po Nagar. This is the earliest surviving Sanskrit inscription of Indochina, which stems from an Indian-style ruler in the southern part of the area of Cham settlement in about the second century A.D. However, it now appears unlikely that there was anything



specially Buddhist about his recorded activities.)[31] Our knowledge of Champa depends a great deal on Chinese sources, which refer to a Cham state (perhaps masking what was in reality a string of autonomous principalities) known as Linyi; it was in the northern part of the Cham territory, with its main settlements between Hue and Quang Tri.[32]

Early Chinese sources hint at evidences of Buddhism. Rolf Stein cites one which describes the Linyi capital and refers to "temples and stupas" (神祠鬼塔), small and large, which add up to eight religious buildings (廟).[33] This expression *gui ta* (鬼塔), translated by Maspero as "stupa of the demons", occurs also as the name of a monument near which, in the middle of the fifth century, the leader of the Chams, Yan Mah, made a last stand against invading Chinese at the Bay of Banh Long.[34] *Gui*, "ghost", is the usual Chinese translation of *preta*, the Buddhist "hungry ghost". The *Shui Jing Zhu* (水經注) describes the Linyi capital and refers to terraced monuments, superimposed belvederes, which look like Buddhist monasteries, *fo cha* (佛刹).[35]

Buddhist monks certainly travelled through the area as pilgrims or emissaries. In 414 A.D. the pilgrim Fa Xian (Fa Hsien) visited the archipelago and reported that Buddhism was scarcely known there, but a few years later Guṇavarman, a Buddhist teacher from Kashmir, taught and gained converts in Java and in Linyi (Champa).[36] One monk, Bhikṣu Sākya Nāgasena, from India, set out to return from Canton with Funanese traders in about 478 A.D. but was wrecked on the Cham coast. True to form, the locals plundered all that he had, and he made his way destitute by land to "Funan".[37] Other monks who went to China from "Funan" included Saṃghapāla (460-524 A.D.) and Mandrasena (503 A.D.).[38] In 539 A.D. envoys from "Funan" carried a supposed hair of the Buddha, twelve feet long, to China.[39] In the seventh century, Buddhism was flourishing in the archipelago. Visiting teachers included Puṇyodana from central India, who may have been responsible for the promulgation of a *vajrayāna* style of Buddhism.[40]

Champa was well placed to be influenced by such events, but the evidence is very scrappy. Perhaps the earliest serious historical record setting out to give specific information about the state of Buddhism in Champa is the account of the late seventh century Chinese pilgrim Yi Jing:

In this country (Linyi) Buddhists generally belong to the Āryasammiti-nikāya, and there are a few followers of the Sarvāstivādanikāya.[41]

This is of some interest, because the Āryasammiti sect is by no means one of the best-known early sects. Related to the Pudgalavādins, it maintained a belief in the integrity of the personal self that came to seem heretical by the standards of the orthodox Sthaviravādin doctrine that eventually came to dominate the Hīnayāna. According to Yi Jing, the Sammitinikāya in India had its chief strength at that time in the west, and to some extent it was known in Magadha. The Sarvāstivādins were a prominent Hīnayāna school in the areas where Mahāyāna first took its rise; it is noteworthy that early Mahāyāna thinkers were exercised by problems raised by Sarvāstivādin texts, and seem on the other hand not to have concerned themselves much if at all with the refutation of Sthaviravāda doctrines.

So far we have considered only the early literary references; the evidence of art history must be noticed too. The archaeological record does not suggest that there were any local Cham workshops producing Buddhist sculpture before the seventh century, but there is certainly evidence of Buddhism in the form of imported images. One of the oldest Buddhist images from Champa is the Dong Duong Buddha, a bronze statue found in an area where Buddhism flourished late in the ninth century but which itself was made, and likely imported, much earlier. It is a standing Buddha a little over a metre high without its pedestal. Boisselier notes a resemblance to a Mon Buddha from Korat.[42] Stylistically it belongs with the art of Amarāvātī in Eastern India, or Anurādhapura in Ceylon (from one of which areas it would have come), in the third or fourth century A.D.[43] Another early image is the Buddha torso from Quang Khe, with both shoulders covered and a narrow thorax, stylistically similar to a P'ong Tūk bronze, which shows Gupta period affiliations and has been dated to the fourth, fifth or sixth century A.D.[44]

Early Cham Buddhism must be seen in the context of religious trends in Indochina as a whole, for many of the influences upon it came from the west rather than from the archipelago. Yi Jing said that Buddhism had formerly flourished among the Khmers, but that a wicked king had persecuted the faith;[45] this ruler may be Īśānavarman I, early in the seventh century, from whose reign there is very little evidence of Buddhism, though inscriptions from Sambor Prei Kuk allude respectfully to the faith and honour Mucalinda, the mythical *nāga* serpent who shaded the meditating Buddha with its hood.[46] By the time of Jayavarman I in the later part of the seventh century there is further epigraphic evidence of Cambodian Buddhist institutions.[47]

Direct links with Champa have been seen in the Buddhism of the Mons, whose Sthaviravāda culture had such a great influence on their neighbours. Examples are two early Cham images of the Buddha seated on the *nāga* between two stupas, an arrangement characteristic of Mon art,[48] and two bronze standing Buddhas.[49] Dupont sees such specimens as evidence of Mon-Cham affinities if not direct links, possibly associated with religious propaganda.[50] But it is noteworthy that there are only a few such evidences of Hīnayāna Buddhism. It stands to reason from our knowledge of the spread of Hīnayāna in early South-East Asia (before the rise of Mahāyāna beginning in the eighth century, to which we shall shortly turn), as well as from the direct testimony of Yi Jing, that Hīnayāna flourished in Champa, but the evidence is exiguous. Perhaps we would be wise to remember that the line between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna was more blurred in the early days than it later became. As Yi Jing himself remarked, "Which of the four schools should be grouped with the Mahāyāna or with the Hīnayāna is not determined." [51]

So far, the evidences adduced belong primarily to the early period of Cham history, when the political entity known to the Chinese as the Linyi arose in the northern part of the Cham territory, with its main settlements between Hue and Quang Tri, partly at the expense of the Chinese empire. But in the eighth century a Cham dynasty (the fifth on Maspero's reckoning) arose further south, in the vicinity of Phan Rang, and its dominion was called Huan Wang by the Chinese. Exactly how the dynasty arose, what was happening in the north, and what the relationships were with the Chams' Khmer and formerly "Funanese"

neighbours, cannot be reliably assessed, but it is clear that this new shift was part of a complex pattern of international relationships involving the ambitions of the Javanese power (this was the era of Mataram) and the events in the Khmer principalities known to the Chinese as Zhenla (Chen-La). Dupont sees the rise of the southern dynasty as part of the political fragmentation of Zhenla, and emphasizes the architectural and sculptural similarities between Champa and the Kulen style that characterized the reunited Khmer society of the period of Jayavarman II.[52] What matters for us particularly is that, from this time onwards, the archipelago, and Java especially, were to be a major influence upon the cultural history of Champa.

Hīnayāna had been active in Java, but evidence of strong Mahāyāna influences in the archipelago begins with the Ligor stele of 775 A.D. and the rise of the Śāilendras of Mataram; inscriptions from Java dated 778 A.D. and 782 A.D. refer, respectively, to the goddess Tārā and to the erection of an image of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.[53] The Śāilendra rulers patronized the erection of many bodhisattva images. The importance of the Borobudur as a Buddhist document scarcely needs any comment. There is no doubt that, from the end of the eighth century onwards, the archipelago, and particularly Java, evolved and disseminated a powerful brand of Mahāyāna Buddhism in which there were clear tantric influences.

To be sure, the strengthened influence upon Champa from the south did not begin auspiciously. In 774 A.D., and then again 787 A.D., seaborne raiders came plundering at points on the coast, sacking temples and seizing loot. There had been earlier depredations by the same people on the coast of Tongking. These raiders are generally thought to have been from Java,[54] though the question of their identity has perhaps not been conclusively answered.

But the links between the Chams and their island trading partners to the south took many cultural and religious forms throughout the rest of Cham history. It has been claimed, for example, that the Mi Son reliefs depict the same sort of monuments as the Borobudur.[55] Parmentier found a great resemblance to Cham architecture in Candi Pari in central Java, a brick tower on a low platform open to the west and with Cham style pilasters.[56] Cham fables are often found verbatim in Malay-speaking countries.[57] The An Thai inscription (discussed below), according to Huber, reveals a type of Buddhism found in Java, Cambodia and China.[58] Around the beginning of the tenth century, a Cham courtier, Rājadvāra, travelled to Java.[59] Later still, complex and rather obscure connections of royal marriage and of Islamic proselytizing bound Champa to Java.[60]

The period from the end of the seventh century to the early tenth corresponds to the spread of Mahāyāna in Cham Buddhism and shows links with the Indo-Javanese style. A group of bronze statuettes from the south of Champa, associated with bodhisattvas, has been seen by J. Boisselier as evidence of the spread of the "Śrīvijaya" school which disseminated Mahāyāna Buddhism from Indonesia from the end of the eighth century onwards.[61] Other icons have been thought to show links with the Buddhism of Dvāravātī. Boisselier cites the Bakul inscription from near Phan Rang, dated 829 A.D. The author of this inscription, Buddhānirvāṇa, records foundations made to the god of Mount Mandara, and mentions two vihāras and two temples (*devakule*

dve) for Jina and Śankara. (A Jina is in this context one of a group of five Buddhas.)

From 854 to 875 A.D. there is a gap in the historical record, and then a new centre of Cham power appears, with a new dynasty further north. From 877 onwards Champa appears in Chinese records with the new name Chan-Cheng. This was the heyday of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Champa, patronized by the king who laid the foundations of the dynasty's fortunes, Jaya Indravarman II, and following rulers to a lesser extent.

It is probably fair to see his accession as the elevation to greater power of a regional aristocratic dynasty. (In the inscription which dedicates the national sanctuary, he confusingly refers to his grandfather and father as kings but insists that he won the throne through his own efforts.) He is known to have begun his reign by 875 A.D., and it did not end before 889 A.D. His posthumous name was Paramabuddhaloka. He reigned from Indrapura, within which was built a new religious foundation as centre of the kingdom; this foundation, dedicated to Lakṣmīndra Lokeśvara Svabhayada, was at Dong Duong, 25 kilometres south-west of Mi Son; it was partially excavated by Parmentier in 1902.

Before his accession, the ruler's style was Lakṣmīndra Bhūmīśvara Grāmasvāmin. In dedicating his national shrine to a Lakṣmīndra Lokeśvara, he was following a well-established tradition by joining his own name to that of his patron deity in a way that symbolized his absorption into the godhead. Hindu parallels are offered by the royal cults of Bhadreśvara and Śambhu-Bhadreśvara in Champa,[62] and the royal statues and *liṅgas* named after deities in Angkor. In this case, however, the patron divinity was a Mahāyāna Buddhist figure, the bodhisattva Lokesvara Svabhayada, a form of Avalokiteśvara. This is unusual. The Khmer monarch Jayavarman VII (c.1181 - c.1218) is the only Mahāyāna Buddhist ruler offering a close analogy.

This temple complex was larger than any Hindu foundation in Champa. It lay in an enclosure 300 metres long and 150 wide, surrounded by a brick wall. It opened to the east and was approached by a causeway. The westernmost of the courtyards into which it was divided contained the central tower sanctuary and eighteen shrines. The sanctuary had an altar against the western wall, backed by a retable; the small pedestal on it is likely to have had a metal statuette of Avalokiteśvara.[63] The third courtyard from the west had a large hall where perhaps monks would gather to meditate.

One feature of Dong Duong art is the *stambhas* (pylons or stupas) which surround the gopuras; they are unlike anything found at other Cham monuments and resemble silhouettes of Vietnamese or Chinese stupas, as Boisselier observes.[64] The relief carvings on the wall represent scenes from Buddhist mythology; not many are identifiable but they include the birth of the Buddha to Māyā in the Lumbini garden, the cutting of his hair and changing of clothes with a hunter as he goes off to be an ascetic, the return of his charioteer Candaka and horse Kanthaka, and the army and the daughters of Māra, seeking to obstruct his accession to nirvāṇa and Buddhahood.[65]

The art of Dong Duong has pronounced Cham characteristics, but it is also international Buddhist art, subject to the influences of various traditions. The *stambhas*, as Boisselier and Dupont have said, suggest Sino-Vietnamese affinities. So does the incomplete figure of

a Buddha sitting European style from the monks' hall, which is rare in Indochina but familiar enough in China and Japan; and the same can be said of kneeling figures of **arhats** with their hands on their knees.[66] Groslier sees Chinese influence in the altars with statues and the small stupa shapes.[67] On the other hand, strong influences from the archipelago, Malaya and the Khmers have been seen in the architecture.[68]

There is a striking vigour about Dong Duong art which appears to owe little to outside influences and has caught the attention of modern art historians. Philippe Stern says that Indian influence is weak, except in the abundance of detail, the "horror of the void, the fantastic and proliferating vegetation"; it is full of the vitality of local genius, with the Cham ethnic type very marked in sculpture, and it possessed "strangeness, power, majesty ... this pronounced local type even seems to capture the Buddha".[69] Groslier also notices the "worm-like" motifs which fill space with detail and exhibit a **horror vacui**; he links it with the "wind and cloud" patterns on Chinese bronzes and some Vietnamese sculpture.[70] Patanne describes the style as robust, indigenous and fantastic.[71] For Philip Rawson, the whole style "gives an impression of excessive energy, scarcely under control".[72] Most impressively, David Snellgrove's compendium on the Buddha image, contributed to by J. Boisselier and others, offers this opinion: "In varying proportions, it associates Indonesian and Chinese influences in a highly individual and absolutely unique interpretation of the supramundane beauty of the Buddha. An art enamoured of power rather than classical beauty, and whose influence was rapidly to fade away, it may well represent the most astonishing aesthetic experience produced by Buddhism."[73]

These views have been collected here, not only because they attest the special importance of the Dong Duong period of Buddhist art in Cham cultural history and indeed in Buddhist history, but also because they bear vitally upon a theme of the present symposium - the relationship between local and cosmopolitan cultural perceptions. This is not the place for detailed art history, but the views just cited clearly support one conclusion: the Buddhism of Dong Duong was **both** powerfully original and richly nourished by exotic influences.

Let us turn now to the epigraphic record. The dedicatory stele inscription of Jaya Indravarman II reflects various Mahāyāna ideas and is of some interest here.[74] In sum, it tells us that in 875 A.D. the king founded a vihāra and temple dedicated to Lakṣmīndra Lokeśvara Svabhayada. Translation and paraphrase of some of the verses, which appear on three faces, A, B, and C, follow here:

B IV ... and in making this supreme, this eminent Lokeśvara, issued from the succession of the Buddhas, ... may I contribute to the deliverance of (beings in) the worlds.

V (paraphrase): this king, thinking that Lokeśvara is always full of compassion, has made the Lokeśvara (image) ...

X As long as the king of the gods (devendra) shall govern heaven by dharma ... so long may the king,

constant in majesty, secure (*nayatu*) the honour and position of Buddha.

- C I For the sake of dharma, the monastery has been founded, (not for) the king, and not from (the motive of) gaining revenue, (simply) for the benefit of the community of monks.[75]
- IV May all who protect these goods of the men of religion - wise brahmans, ascetics, relatives of the king, etc. - attain with their relatives to the city (*puram*, amended by Finot from *param*) of Buddhist deliverance; may those who seize or destroy (those goods) fall into the hell of Rudra.
- VIII Those who preserve these goods - fields, etc. - for the use of the community of monks shall reach the place of Buddha.

There follows an enumeration of the fields, slaves, silver, gold and so forth bestowed upon the religious community. "The king gave all these fields for Lokeśa" (D III: *kṣetrāṇyetāni sarvāṇi lokeśāya nppo 'dadat*).

The inscription is a good example of the Śiva-Buddha association that is conspicuous in Champa. Verses I-X on face A relate the present ruler to a mythical genealogy and to the *liṅga* cults of previous kings. Verse XVI refers to the Śiva of these cults, Śambhubhadreśvara, as protecting Champa, the city where all dharmas, teachings, have been shown (*Campāpurim darśitasarvadharmām*). In B VII it is said that various gods appear in the world for the deliverance of creatures, the Buddha being listed as one of several. In B III the present ruler is described as establishing a Śambhu *liṅga*. Such eclecticism reminds us again of the links with Java, where the syncretism of Buddha and Śiva went very far. In later centuries, indeed, the Javanese Hindu-Buddhist culture came to associate Śiva and Buddha with the cults of kings, the whole brew richly seasoned with tantra. "From a monist viewpoint based on a syncretism between Buddhism and Śaivism, the king is the incarnation of a Śiva-Buddha entity".[76] The same sort of royal apotheosis was well known in Angkor in the memorial iconography often nowadays mistakenly identified with the *devarāja* cult. It is an example of the Hindu-Buddhist syncretism that seems to have gone further in South-East Asia than in India.

Another inscription from the same period which appears to reflect the favour enjoyed by Buddhism is that of Ron, near Deo Ngang up in the north, on the ancient boundary between Champa and Vietnam. An unnamed king made donations to a monastery dedicated to Avalokiteśvara. It begins: "Honour to that worshipful one the glorious lord of the *Ḍāmaras*" (*Namaḥ tasmai bhagavate śrī Ḍāmareśvarāya*).[77] *Ḍāmareśvara* is a name applied to the leader of a group of attendants on Śiva, but it came to be applied to Avalokiteśvara.

But from the point of view of Buddhist history perhaps the most important inscription of all is that of An Thai, in Quang Nam. Dating from 902 A.D., it records the consecration of a *lokanātha* in the vihāra of Pramuditalokeśvara. No doubt the icon solemnly consecrated was a statue of Avalokiteśvara. The beneficiary was the monk Nāgapuṣpa, a friend of King Bhadravarman who had built for him a monastery

dedicated to Lokeśvara for the sake of his glory and that of the **dharma**. The next king, Indravarma, confirmed the endowments, and exempted the monastery from tax. By the date of the inscription, Indravarma had died and the reigning monarch was his nephew Siphavarman.

The inscription begins with an invocation to Lokanātha (Lokeśvara). The first two Sanskrit verses are badly mutilated, but appear to embody the claim, in honour of Avalokiteśvara, that, so great being his power, the damned in hell had only to let their minds dwell on him (**smṛtvā lokeśvara ...**) to obtain instant deliverance.

(line 1) Svasti

vena ... mūrtir vyaktaika ... tasmai namaḥ (2) kāruṇikāya  
nityam ... (3) ... vigatasukhā lohadaṇḍābhighātāḥ  
smṛtvā lokeśvara ... (4) ... kevalamokṣam āpuḥ[78]

Hail! Salutation to the compassionate one by whom ...  
(one) form ... has been manifested. Those whose happiness  
was gone away, smitten by iron rods ... attained unalloyed  
salvation by thinking of Lokeśvara.

Here is verse 3:

Mārair ugraḥ paritās ciram api manujāḥ pūrvvakarmānuraktā  
nistrāṇā ... paramakaluṣitāḥ kṣutpipāsābhībhūtāḥ  
pūrvan cādānaḍṣāt sugatavimukhataḥ prāpta ...  
... vajrapāṇipraśamitanirayaḥ buddhamārgaḥ samapuḥ

Attached to their former (evil) deeds, some men remain  
without hope (in hell), surrounded for all eternity by the  
vile (servants) of Māra utterly defiled, tortured by hunger  
and thirst; others, not having practised charity in this life,  
having turned away from Sugata (Buddha) in ... (they escape)  
the hell which Vajrapāṇi annihilates and they obtain the way  
to Buddha.

It goes without saying that this style of thought, particularly the idea that one can be saved from damnation by merely thinking of Avalokiteśvara, conspicuously represents the Sukhāvātī doctrine of the cult of Amitābha or Amida - the idea of the Western Paradise presided over by the Buddha of Infinite Light, with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara acting for him, into which through grace the devotee may be reborn by calling upon the Buddha's name. It is an essentially Mahāyāna doctrine. Less familiar though is the remarkable piece of metaphysics embodied in verses VIII to X:

VIII vajradhātur asau pūrvvam śrīśākyamuniśāsanāt  
śūnyo 'pi vajradhṛḍḍhetuḥ buddhānām (12) ālayo 'bhavat

IX padmadhātur ato lokeśvarahetur jinālayaḥ  
amītabhavaco yuktyā (13) mahāśūnyo babhūva ha

X B (1) cakradhātur asau śūnyātīto vairocanañjñāyā  
vajrasattvasya hetuḥ syāt tṛtīyo (2) 'bhūj jinālayaḥ[79]

VIII Formerly Vajradhātu, by order of Śākyamuni, became a receptacle of the Buddhas, he who, though being the void, is the efficient cause of Vajradhara.

- IX Then Padmadhātu, who is the great void and the efficient cause of Avalokiteśvara, became, by order of Amitābha, a receptacle of the Jinas (Buddhas).
- X Finally Cakradhātu, who is the transcendent void and the efficient cause of Vajrasattva, by order of Vairocana, was the third receptacle of the Jinas (Buddhas).

Huber, who first published this inscription, compared the Buddhism in it to those of Cambodia and China. For him, these three verses represent tantric theology, but he was not sure whether he had got it right, "because the present state of Mahayanist studies still does not allow us to follow the good Nāgapaṣpa over this featureless territory".[80]

Boisselier, writing half a century later, was not able to throw a great deal more light on the problem. The set of correspondences set out in these verses do not align Avalokiteśvara with Śākyamuni as one would expect:

By the grace of { (Śākyamuni) } are born { (Vajradhātu) } Buddha { (Vajradhara) }  
 { (Amitābha) } { (Padmadhātu) } receptacles { (Avalokiteśvara) }  
 of { (Vairocana) } { (Cakradhātu) } and causes of { (Vajrasattva) }

Perhaps the association in verse III between Vajrapāṇi and Vajradhara does help to make the required connection. Nāgapaṣpa, suggests Boisselier, might have inaugurated this system at Dong Duong, where the vihāra altar, and not the principal sanctuary, was reserved for the Buddha Śākyamuni.[81]

Another important inscription from the same period comes from Nhan Bieu in the southern part of Quang Tri. It is on four faces of a stele; local people at some stage wished to use the stele for a millstone but couldn't cut it; they succeeded only in ruining one line of the inscription.[82] It records that Pov Kluñ Piliḥ Rājadvāra and his oldest son or elder brother (agraja)[83] consecrated a Śiva temple and also, in 911 A.D., a Buddhist monastery dedicated to Avalokiteśvara, called Vṛddhalokeśvara in honour of their ancestress Princess Lyāḥ Vṛddhakulā. Dupont sees in this the influence of the more pronounced local interest in the worship of female divinities and the higher status of women, imposed on the imported Indian religion.[84] (Compare the fate that befell Avalokiteśvara in China: he turned into the goddess Guan Yin.) Rājadvāra served four kings at court: Jaya Siṃhavarman, Jayaśaktivarman (not otherwise known), Bhadravarman II Jaya Indravarman II. He made two trips to Java.

A VIII javadvīpapuram bhūpānujñāto dūtakarmani  
 gatvā yaḥ pratipattisthaḥ siddhayātrām samāgamat

He, firm in purpose, went with the permission of the king on a diplomatic mission to the capital of Java where his journey was successful.[85]

Here, Huber read *nūtakarmani* in the first line, but Majumdar's preference for *dūta* is confirmed from the rubbing in Paris (Claude Jacques, personal communication). This perhaps militates against Huber's interpretation of *siddhayātrā* as a reference to a pilgrimage undertaken to acquire magic science, which would be interesting evidence of tantra.[86]



In verses B XVIII and XIX we are told of Rājadvāra's consecration of temples to Śiva and Avalokiteśvara. This represents the easy intermingling of Hinduism and Buddhism in the currency of religious life, familiar in the ancient South-East Asian kingdoms, particularly Java.

Another inscription comes from Dai Huu in Quang Binh. It belongs to the period of Jaya Simhavarman (reigned 989-903 A.D.), one of whose functionaries endowed a shrine to Ratnalokeśvara; the inscription mentions a Ratnalokeśvara made of silver set up at Vṛddha Ratnapura. Thus, for once, the shrine icon takes its name from the locality rather than the donor. This statue has not been positively identified, but the site produced various pieces of Buddhist art. The inscription was on the spout of a *snānadroṇī* (ritual ablution tank) in the central sanctuary. Two Prajñāpāramitās and parts of a third were found, and an Avalokiteśvara compared stylistically by Boisselier to others in Sumatra, India and pre-Angkorian Cambodia.[87] There was also a Lokeśvara statuette with the top broken off, of gilded bronze; it is in the Gandharan style, with flowing robes, and appears to be of Chinese manufacture.[88] Finot and Goloubew conclude that Quang Binh, in the north of Champa, must have had many Buddhist monasteries.

An example of this would be the large complex at Mi Duc. Père de Pirey conducted some archaeological work there. The site produced three statues, including two Lokeśvaras.[89] Also found was a fragment of an inscription with no date but mentioning the two Buddha attributes *jagadguru* (teacher of the world) and *abhayada* (giving freedom from fear).[90]

The last dated artifact from the Dong Duong period of Buddhist culture in Champa is the inscription from Kon Klor, at Kontum. Dated 914 A.D., it stems from one Mahīndravarmān, who had consecrated an image called Mahīndralokeśvara.[91] Here again we see the practice of naming a shrine image after a combination of the names of deity and donor. The suffix *-varman* attached to the style of this donor usually forms part of regnal names; this Mahīndravarmān is described by Finot as a local chief.[92] Perhaps we should remember that the Chinese accounts and inscriptional claims which represent Indochinese kingdoms as centralized states may often be misleading; a thin line could divide a unified kingdom from an arena of competing principalities.

It should not be thought that the Dong Duong period represents a total victory for Buddhism, displacing other cults and claiming pre-eminence in the orthodoxy of the court. All that happened was that some kings of the new dynasty gave special patronage to Mahāyāna monks, especially of course the foundation of Indravarmān II at Indrapura, which for a time served as the religious centre of the state. Many dignitaries interested themselves in the maintenance of Mahāyāna foundations; and images of Avalokiteśvara, named after their donors, embody the special favour attracted by the bodhisattva of compassion. But, as we have seen, the customary mélange of devotions, in which the worship of Śiva was conspicuous alongside Buddhism, continued; and in the following centuries Buddhism continued alongside the Hindu sects. There is no real evidence of rivalry or exclusiveness. Buddhism took its place as a part of the fabric of Cham élite culture; it did not make monopolistic claims upon the faith of its adherents.

The heyday of Dong Duong Buddhism was soon over, and for most of the tenth century few evidences of the faith are extant. For our

purposes, the rest of the story is something of an anti-climax; Champa, though still capable from time to time of imperial glory, was increasingly on the defensive, and so far as Buddhism at any rate is concerned there were no more florescences of native tradition. From the eleventh century onwards, Mahāyāna influences were very strong, but the scantily represented Buddhist art of the later period has been described as showing influences rather from Mon Dvāravatī, or from Ceylon.[93]

Influences from Vietnam and China are perhaps less impressive than facts of geography alone would suggest. The Dong Duong period is an exception to this; P. Dupont devoted an article to evidences of Chinese influence upon its style,[94] and, as noted above, many Chinese affinities have been detected by modern scholars. Up to the tenth century, the incorporation of the Vietnamese within the Chinese empire may justify the habit of treating Vietnamese and Chinese Buddhism together, with little differentiation; but thereafter, with independence, Vietnamese culture increasingly went its own way. The Dinh dynasty, in the late tenth century, established an ecclesiastical Buddhist hierarchy and lavishly patronized the samgha; following dynasties did likewise, and sponsored the importation of Buddhist texts from China for copying. In 1068 there was founded a Chan subject called the Thao Duong, named after a Chinese monk who lived in Champa and who was carried off to Vietnam along with the spoils of war; he gave religious instruction to the emperor, who sponsored his disciples, and the new school became very popular.[95]

For all that, the evidences within Champa seem to point more to links westward and southward. The twelfth century was marked by ultimately disastrous wars with the Khmers, followed by temporary Khmer occupation; a phase of Buddhist art showing affinities to the "Bayon style" characterizes a period around 1200-1220 A.D., while in the later part of the thirteenth century the tantric influences in Champa have been taken to suggest Javanese rather than Khmer influences.[96]

Evidence of Buddhism in the post-Dong Duong centuries is disjointed and scrappy. There were no more great royal foundations comparable with that of Indravarman II. Instead we find incidental allusions in the epigraphy, archaeological fragments here and there, and traditions and memories embodied in the literature and lore of Chams and Vietnamese of later times.

Many of the recollections of Cham Buddhism are undatable, and may represent almost any period if indeed they are reliable. Various allusions, for example, were unearthed by the explorations of L. Cadière early in this century.[97]

Pirey found a stone block decorated with stupa outlines said to resemble those of Tibet (conceivably connected with the *stambha* motif at Dong Duong).[98] The Buddhist *Ye Dharma* formula of devotion, familiar as an inscription on artifacts from other parts of South-East Asia in ancient times, appears on the back of a pedestal.[99]

More spectacular are the Buddhist caves at two sites. One site, that of the "Marble Mountain" beside the Vu Gia at Faifo, is popularly regarded as Vietnamese; it is not clear what might be shown by further study of it.[100]

Up in the north, in Quang Binh, are the caves of Phong Na. They are approached by a very long tunnel which must have heightened the

devotees' sense of awe and mystery. They have yielded a Buddha image and an inscription referring to Sāriputra, the famous apostle of the Buddha. Majumdar refers to thirty-six other inscriptions, all undeciphered.[101] At this cave site were found thirty-five votive medallions evidencing that pilgrims came here, bringing the medallions as an act of ritual piety. Finot compared them to Buddhist seals found in India.[102] and identified five categories or types to which they belong: Buddha, haloed and seated on a lotus; stupa, with umbrella on either side; a seated figure, either Padmapāṇi or Avalokiteśvara; seated figure with four arms holding bow and arrow; four-armed goddess seated on a lotus, holding two more lotuses.[103] He noticed the śaivite characteristics of the last two but was inclined to see the fourth as Avalokiteśvara and the fifth as Tārā. The character of the cave as a centre of Mahāyāna worship, with a tantric flavour, appears to be indicated by these medallions.[104]

A few incidental references to Buddhist monks or Buddhist doctrines can be dated, particularly when they come from Vietnamese or Chinese sources. From the story of the invasion by the conquering Vietnamese leader Le Huan in 982, for example, we learn that after taking the capital he carried off a hundred women, one Indian Buddhist monk (*tian zhu seng* 天竺僧), and quantities of gold.[105] (The Chinese *seng* represents the Sanskrit *saṃgha*, the Buddhist community.)[106]

Perhaps not yet fully appreciated is the importance of the links between Champa and Java, whose histories are rarely studied together; perhaps there is a great deal waiting to be learned from such an exercise.

It is not an exercise that can be embarked upon here. But let us note that the relationship was indeed a multi-faceted one. Trade directly between the two areas was flourishing - it was from Java that such early European visitors as Nicolo de Conti arrived. Diplomatic links and religious visits tied them together; let us recall the two visits made by Rājadvāra. To such episodes must be added the direct liaisons between Cham and Javanese royalty attested by later sources.

There were two such links in the fourteenth century, the period of Majapahit. Around the beginning of the century, Jaya Simhavarman III married a Javanese princess, Tapasī. A little later, Che Nang, the Cham puppet ruler set up by the Vietnamese conqueror An Huang, asserted his independence and fled to Java; perhaps he was a son of this Javanese princess.[107]

An altogether more complicated and obscure episode occurred later in the century. The traditional Javanese story is that Dvāravatī, a sister of a Cham king, married Brawijaya, ruler of Majapahit. Dvāravatī is credited with having promoted the spread of Islam in Java. She is supposed to have died in 1398 A.D., although a tombstone thought to be hers bears the date 1448 A.D. There are various difficulties with this story, and it may never be possible to reconstruct the whole truth.[108]

There is little that can safely be said about the events which prompted the Dvāravatī story, except that they attest close links between Java and what was then left of Champa. If Slametmuljana is right, the overseas Chinese had a lot to do with the dissemination of Islam in both places. Islam may not have gained a hold on the Cham people so early, though by as early as the eleventh century there is

evidence of the existence of a Muslim foreign merchant community, some of mixed blood, representing their interests to the local government.[109] Muslim tradition points to Muslim traders from Champa as having been important in the spread of Islam.[110]

We are not here concerned with Islam in Champa, but we may note that the commercial cosmopolitanism that underlay the fortunes of Islam in South-East Asia may offer parallels to the Buddhist story. Champa lay open to new influences, and was ready to digest them all. Its religious culture was synthetic and eclectic. Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna, tantra and Hindu devotion were mingled together in the religious life of pious Chams. Sectarian allegiance was not exclusive. Rulers and dignitaries impartially endowed Śaivite temples and Buddhist monasteries.[111] Rājadvāra and his brother founded both Śaivite and Buddhist sanctuaries.[112] Śaivite motifs decorated the (Buddhist) Dong Duong temples.[113] Śiva and Buddha were very close together in Cham consciousness.

Buddhism took its place, then, in court culture - not so much as an independent and organized institution, but rather as a part of the Great Tradition that belonged to the court and which it was the business of educated men to study. With the decline of the court culture, Buddhism and Hinduism alike lost their vitality, except in the sense that they were a vehicle for the expression of motifs of indigenous culture. Styles of artistic expression underwent successive changes: the 'nativism' of the Dong Duong period was followed by a more sober trend, described by Stern as "un style raffiné, élégant, déagagé," that was consciously influenced by exotic models, from Cambodia and Java especially.[114] But in the following period the new motifs were ossified, according to Stern, and the decadent Binh Dinh style saw a re-emergence of indigenous fantastic elements, and in the final decline the absorption of the international Great Tradition into the coarser texture of autochthonous culture is neatly symbolized by the way in which inherited sculptural motifs actually seem to retreat into the blocks of stone on which they are carved.[115] This is exactly the process which Mus documented in his paper on Champa and India.[116]

Animism, in a broad sense, was part of the eclectic mosaic, but perhaps Mus has said the last word on that. Among the Chams of more recent times, religion has in some ways retreated to the condition that characterized it before the Indian faiths and institutions came to give Cham culture the sophistication of lettered culture, urban life, professional priests, and all the trappings of civilization. The ruins of their Hindu-Buddhist past are now misunderstood and misremembered, but, simply because they represent a glorious past, they attract a numinous reverence that irresistibly recalls the antique cults of rough stones. It is one of the ironies of history.

It chanced that Buddhism did not survive the impoverishment of Cham culture, while Hinduism, which put down deeper roots, did. Therefore the evidence reviewed above cannot strictly be used to support the argument that Buddhism penetrated all levels of religious consciousness, in folk culture as well as in the courts and the great foundations. It is sufficient nevertheless to exhibit the variety of functions it performed. Buddhism supplied state cults, legitimizing kings; it supplied ingredients for an established orthodoxy, embodied in numerous well-endowed landed institutions with an important economic rôle; it accommodated cults of ancestors, including female ancestors;

its shrines came to possess a talismanic magic, especially when they were ruins; it offered, in the person of Avalokiteśvara the compassionate, the instruments of devotional or **bhakti** religion; and it purveyed an abundant literature for the lucubrations of scholarly monks. Considered as a subordinate part of Cham culture, Cham Buddhism is a local phenomenon, best understood in its relationships to the rest of that culture (Dong Duong was unique); but, considered as a bundle of religious activities, it has cognates in most other parts of Monsoon Asia. A culture is not a monolithic 'personality'; the elements within it, indigenous as well as exotic, are constantly being adapted to new types of activity. In the phrasing of the symposium programme, Buddhism in Champa was indeed a 'foreign cultural element' that was 'accepted, fractured and restated', re-arranging the kaleidoscope; of course new patterns were formed, but the components of these patterns were much like components of patterns elsewhere.

## NOTES

- \* The author is grateful for the comments and suggestions of Associate Professor D.P. Chandler and Mr John Berry, and has benefited from the assiduous bibliographic work of Mr W. Hankin, and the editorial comments of Dr David Marr. Professor Claude Jacques has kindly checked inscriptional references against rubbings in Paris and offered several suggestions.
1. O.W. Wolters, **History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives**, Singapore 1982. See especially pp.56-68.
  2. P. Mus, "Cultes Indiens et Indigènes au Champa", **Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient** (hereafter BEFEO), Vol. XXXIII (1933), pp. 367-410; English trans. and ed. I.W. Mabbett and D.P. Chandler, as **India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa**, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Clayton 1975. References here are to the English edition. On Yan In, see pp.51 f.
  3. J. Boisselier, **La Statuaire du Champa**, Paris 1963 (Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. 54); the same author is responsible for the contributions on South-East Asia in D. Snellgrove, ed., **The Image of the Buddha**, Paris 1978.
  4. E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et Leurs Religions", **Revue de l'Histoire des Religions**, vol.24 (1891), p.187.
  5. E. Lunet de Lajonquière, **Atlas Archéologique de l'Indochine: Monuments du Champa et du Cambodge**, Paris 1901.
  6. P. Gourou, **L'Utilization du Sol en Indochine Française**, Paris 1943, p.122.
  7. G. Maspero, **Le Royaume de Champa**, Paris/Bruxelles 1928, p.6 n.5.
  8. G. Moussay, "Coup d'oeil sur les Cam d'aujourd'hui", **Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises**, vol.XLVI (1971), pp.361-370.
  9. P. Mus, **India seen from the East**, op.cit., esp. pp.52 f.
  10. P. Gourou, op.cit., pp.46, 124.
  11. The Cham for "sunset" means "sun plunge into sea" (E. Patanne, "The Lost Civilization of Champa", **Arts of Asia**, Jan.-Feb. 1976, pp.38-43 at p.38). Cp. J. Anceaux, **Bijdragen**, vol.121 (1965), pp.417-32, esp. p.421; A.G. Haudricourt, "Les Origines Asiatiques des Langues Malayo-Polynésiennes", **Journal de la Société des Oceanistes**, vol.10 (1954), pp.180-83. The writer is indebted to H.H.E. Loofs-Wissowa, personal communication, for comments and references on this point.
  12. P. Bellwood, "Plants, Climate and People: the Early Horticultural Prehistory of Austronesia", in T. Fox, R. Garnaut, P. McCawley and J.A.C. Mackie, eds., **Indonesia: Australian Perspectives**, Canberra 1980, pp.57-74; see especially map on p.58.
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15. H. Parmentier, "Notes sur les Fouilles du Sanctuaire de Dong-Duong", BEFEO, vol.III (1903), pp.80-85 at p.81; idem, "Les Monuments du Cirque de Mi-son", BEFEO, vol. IV (1904), pp.805-96 at pp.808 f; L. Cadière, "Monuments et Souvenirs Cham du Quang Tri et du Thua Thien", BEFEO, vol.V Parts 1-2 (1905), pp.185-95 at p.190; P. Gourou, op.cit., p.126.
16. For a summary of commodities traded in Champa, see G. Maspero, op.cit., p.33 f.
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18. L. Arousseau, "Compte Rendu de Le Royaume de Champa", BEFEO, vol. XIV (1914), Part 9, pp.8-43 at p.16.
19. G. Maspero, op.cit., pp.227 f.
20. H.H. Smith, et.al., **Area Handbook for South Vietnam**, Washington D.C. 1967, p.22.
21. Chou Ta-Kuan, **Mémoires sur les Coutumes du Cambodge de Tcheou Takouan**, trans. P. Pelliot, Paris 1951 (Oeuvres Posthumes de P. Pelliot No.3), p.13.
22. G. Maspero, op.cit., p.84.
23. R.C. Majumdar, **Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East**, Vol.1. Champa, Lahore, 1927, pp.64 f; *ibid.*, Book III. Inscriptions, No.45, pp.138f; L. Finot, "Hindu Kingdoms in Indochina", **Indian Historical Quarterly**, vol.I part 4 (1925), pp.599-621 at p.609; G. Maspero, op.cit., p.117.
24. L. Finot, "Hindu Kingdoms", *loc.cit.*, p.609.
25. R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., pp. 88f; G. Maspero, op.cit., p.147.
26. These figures are given both by P. Mus, op.cit., p.3 and R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., p.170.
27. A. Bergaigne, "L'Ancien Royaume du Tchampa", **Journal Asiatique**, Jan. 1888, cited by E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leur religions", **Revue de l'Histoire des Religions**, vol.XXIV (1891), pp.187-237.
28. L. Finot, "La Religion des Chams d'après les Monuments", BEFEO, vol.I (1901), pp.12 ff. at p.27.
29. R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., p.208.
30. L. Finot, in **Journal Asiatique**, 1927, p.186; *cp. idem*, "Notes d'Épigraphie Indochinoise; XIV: Les Inscriptions du Musée de Hanoi", BEFEO, vol.XV Part 2 (1915), pp.1-3; and P. Dupont, "Tchen-La et Panduranga", **Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises**, vol.XXIV (1949), pp.1-19.
31. Later authors have contested the identification and the chronology, and a literature has grown up around the inscription. In a relatively recent article, J. Filliozat accepts the early dating but rejects the inference of Buddhism. He sees instead evidence of the influence in Indochina of Tamil Śaivism, with its explicit value on Karuṇā (Tamil **arul**), and Tamil precedents for rulers taking the name **MaRaṇ**; the sacrifice of one's goods can be traced to brahmanic tradition; J.

31. (continued)  
Fillozat, "L'Inscription Dite 'de Vo-canh'", **BEFEO**, vol.LV (1969), pp.107-119.
32. R. Stein, "Le Lin Yi", **Han Hiue**, vol.II (1947) pp.1-123.
33. Ibid., p.94.
34. G. Maspero, op.cit., p.72.
35. L. Arousseau, "Compte Rendu", loc.cit., p.23.
36. D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit. p.155.
37. L. Finot, "Buddhism in Indochina", **The Buddhist Review**, (Oct. 1909), p.234; P. Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan", **BEFEO**, vol.III (1903). It is not clear what political entity corresponded to the Chinese "Funan".
38. L. Finot, "Buddhism in Indochina", loc.cit.; D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit., p.155.
39. L. Finot, "Buddhism in Indochina", loc.cit., p.236.
40. D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit., p.155.
41. I-tsing, **A record of the Buddhist Religion**, trans. J. Takakusu, Oxford 1896, p.12.
42. J. Boisselier, op.cit., pp.24 f.
43. A. Coomaraswamy, **History of Indian and Indonesian Art**, New York 1965 (reprint of 1927 ed.), p.197 and fig.43.
44. J. Boisselier, op.cit., p.27.
45. D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit., p.161.
46. L.P. Briggs, **The Ancient Khmer Empire**, Philadelphia 1951, p.51.
47. Ibid., p.55.
48. P. Dupont, **Archéologie Mône de Dvāravatī**, 2 Vols., Paris 1959, p.260 and figs.494, 496, 497.
49. Ibid., p.227 and figs.469, 470.
50. Ibid., p.261.
51. I-tsing, op.cit., p.14. The four schools are the Mahāsaṃghikas, the Sthaviravādins, the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the Mahāsaṃmitīyas.
52. P. Dupont, "Tchen-La et Panduranga", **Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises**, vol. XXIV (1949), pp.20 f, 23.
53. L.P. Briggs, op.cit., p.66.
54. R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., p.50; G. Maspero, op.cit., pp.97 f.
55. See Maspero, ibid., p.36, n.5.
56. H. Parmentier, **Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments Cams de L'Annam**, 2 Vols., Paris 1902-1918, vol.2, pp.566 ff.



57. P. Mus, "Littérature Chame", in S. Levi, ed., **Indochine**, Paris 1931, pp.193-200.
58. E. Huber, "Etudes Indochinoises, XII, L'Epigraphie de la Dynastie de Dong-Duong", **BEFEO**, vol. XI (1911), pp.277-82.
59. See p.302.
60. See p.305.
61. J. Boisselier, op.cit., p.75; ep. D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit., p.164.
62. P. Mus, **India seen from the East**, op.cit., p.50.
63. J. Boisselier, op.cit., pp.108 f. In 1978, a bronze statue 115 cm high was found beneath a nearby field, and is believed by Vietnamese scholars to be the missing Avalokiteśvara statuette: Tran Ky Phuong, "Cham Buddhism through the Art", Institute of Fine Art Researches, Hanoi n.d. (mimeographed article).
64. Ibid., p.96.
65. Ibid., p.109.
66. Ibid., p.98; P. Dupont, "Les Apports Chinois dans le Style Bouddhique de Dong-Duong", loc.cit.
67. B.P. Groslier, **The Art of Indochina**, New York 1962, p.136.
68. Ibid., p.143; J. Boisselier, op.cit., p.96; E. Patanne, loc.cit., p.40.
69. P. Stern, **L'Art du Champa (ancien Annam) et son Evolution**, Paris 1942, p.8.
70. B.P. Groslier, op.cit., p.141.
71. E. Patanne, loc.cit., p.40.
72. P. Rawson, **The Arts of South-East Asia**, London 1967, p.127.
73. D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit., p.164.
74. L. Finot, "La Première Stèle de Dong Duong", **BEFEO**, vol.IV (1904), pp.85 ff.; R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., Inscription 31, pp.74-88.
75. The text here is incomplete. The verse, on Finot's reading, is:  
 ...**(dha) rmārtham vihāras sthapito ...**  
**(rā) jñō na tvākarādānād bhikṣusaṅgha (prayo) janam.**
76. D. Snellgrove, ed., op.cit., p.333.
77. E. Huber, "Etudes Indochinoises, XI", **BEFEO**, vol.XI (1911), p.267, R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., Inscription 123, p.225.
78. E. Huber, "Etudes Indochinoises, XII", **BEFEO**, vol.XI (1911) pp.277-82, R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., Inscription 37, pp. 105-09. I follow the reading of R.C. Majumdar, which yields most of the meaning.
79. E. Huber, "Etudes Indochinoises, XII", loc.cit.
80. Ibid., p.281.

81. J. Boisselier, *op.cit.*, p.122.
82. E. Huber, "Etudes Indochinoises, XII: L'Epigraphie de la Dynastie de Dong-Duong", *BEFEO*, vol.XI (1911), pp.299-311; R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, Inscription 43, pp.129-37.
83. Huber translates this as "son", but see M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford 1899, s.v. *agraja*; J. Boisselier, *op.cit.*, p.125. However, Claude Jacques is inclined by the context of this reference to prefer "oldest son" (personal communication).
84. P. Dupont, "Les Apports Chinois", *loc.cit.*, p.274.
85. E. Huber, "La Stèle", *loc.cit.*
86. R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p.134 n.3, translates the second line as "obtained credit by the success of his undertaking". A *siddhiyātrika* is indeed "one who makes pilgrimages to learn magical arts ..." (Monier-Williams, *op.cit.*, s.v. *siddhi*), but the interpretation of the whole verse by Majumdar, preferred by Claude Jacques, is more natural.
87. J. Boisselier, *op.cit.*, pp.133-35.
88. *Ibid.*, p.135; L. Finot et V. Goloubew, "Fouilles de Dai Huu", *BEFEO*, vol.XXV (1925), "Notes et Mélanges", pp.469-75 at p.471.
89. J. Boisselier, *op.cit.*, pp.136 f.
90. See "Fouilles du P. Pirey", *BEFEO*, vol.XVIII (1918), Part 10 p.61; *BEFEO*, vol.XXII (1922), "Chronique", pp.372 ff.; *BEFEO*, vol.XXV (1925), p.474.
91. J. Boisselier, *op.cit.*, p.127; L. Finot, "Lokēśvara en Indochine", *Etudes Asiatiques*, vol.1 (EFEO Publications, vol.XIX), Paris 1925, pp.232-56 at p.234.
92. L. Finot, *ibid.*
93. D. Snellgrove, ed., *op.cit.*, p.331.
94. L. Dupont, "Les Apports Chinois dans le Style Bouddhique de Dong-Duong", *BEFEO*, vol.XLIV Part 1 (1951), pp.267-74.
95. Le Thanh Khoi, *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et Civilisation*, Paris 1955, p.152.
96. D. Snellgrove, ed., *op.cit.*, p.331.
97. L. Cadière, "Monuments et Souvenirs Cham du Quang Tri et du Thua Thien", *BEFEO*, vol.V Parts 1-2 (1905), pp.185-95.
98. Fr de Pirey, "Fouilles", in *BEFEO*, vol.XXII (1922), "Chronique", p.372.
99. H. Parmentier, *Inventaire*, *op.cit.*, vol.I, p.244; R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, Inscription 126.
100. R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p.6; G. Maspero, *op.cit.*, plate VI opp. p.36.
101. R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, pp.259 f.

102. L. Finot, "La Religion des Chams d'après les Monuments", **BEFEO**, vol.I (1901), p.23.
103. *Ibid.*, pp.24-26.
104. G. Coedès, "Tablettes Votives Bouddhiques du Siam", **Etudes Asiatiques** (E.F.E.O. Publications, vol.XIX), Paris 1925, pp.145-67.
105. R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, pp.71 f; G. Maspero, *op.cit.*, p.123.
106. W.E. Soothill and L. Hodous, **A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms**, London 1937, p.420.
107. G. Maspero, *op.cit.*, p.189; R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, pp.122, 126.
108. G. Maspero, *op.cit.*, p.228; Slametmuljana, **The Story of Majapahit**, Singapore, 1976, pp.223 f, 234-37. Slametmuljana has a theory that Dvāravatī was in fact the Chinese wife of the Chinese envoy Ma Hong Fu, and a daughter of Bong Ta Keng, supervisor of the Chinese in Champa appointed by the Grand Admiral Zheng He of naval fame.
109. P. Ravaisse, "Deux Inscriptions Couffiques du Champa", **Journal Asiatique**, vol.XX (1922), pp.247 ff.
110. Pigeaud, **Java in the Fourteenth Century: A Study in Cultural History**, vol.IV, The Hague 1963, p.493.
111. G. Maspero, *op.cit.*, pp.9, 12, 108, n.1; R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, *Inscriptions* 28, 31, 43.
112. E. Huber, "Etudes Indochinoises, XII", **BEFEO**, vol.XI (1911), pp.299-311.
113. H. Parmentier, **Inventaire**, *op.cit.*, vol.II, p.434; R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p.211.
114. P. Stern, **L'Art du Champa (ancien Annam) et son Evolution**, Paris 1942, p.10.
115. *Ibid.*, p.12.
116. P. Mus, **India seen from the East**, *op.cit.*, see especially pp.50 f.

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# 17

## The Ordering of Generations: Change and Continuity in Old Javanese Kinship

James J. Fox\*

### Introduction

This brief communication is intended to offer a few simple observations on old Javanese kinship. In 1977, when I was a Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Wassenaar, I had the good fortune of spending a considerable time with the noted scholar P.J. Zoetmulder, who was then in the process of completing his massive dictionary of old Javanese. In the course of various informal discussions, the question arose of whether it was possible to construct from among the entries in his dictionary the structure of the old Javanese kinship system. The question was not simply a philological one of tracing the changes that have occurred in the Javanese words used to refer to particular categories of relatives, but rather the more anthropological question of investigating whether a coherent terminological system could be established for old Javanese relational categories as a whole, and whether it was possible to compare this configuration of relationship terms with that used by Javanese today. This exercise seemed particularly relevant to the study of Javanese history because, since the time of W.H. Rassers, there have been persistent suggestions in the published literature on Java (see Bertling 1936 as an example) that the kinship and social organization of ancient Java was markedly different from that of the present day. Therefore, with typical enthusiasm, Zoetmulder searched his entire collection of file cards and produced for me all of the entries that he could find that related to kinship. Zoetmulder's dictionary has since been published and is generally available. It is nevertheless appropriate that I acknowledge that the initial analysis on which this paper is based was undertaken with Zoetmulder's unpublished notes and thoughtful assistance.

### Old Javanese and modern Javanese

Methodological difficulties abound in attempting a comparison between old Javanese and modern Javanese particularly on account of the problems involved in specifying the two targets for comparison. For his purposes Zoetmulder defines old Javanese as the language of the earliest Javanese literature which was produced on Java between the

9th and 14th centuries, and thereafter was preserved on Bali where it has continued in use to the present day. This definition embraces both the conventionally defined old Javanese of the *kakawin* and early prose literature, which spans nearly a thousand years with relatively little change in form, as well as the so-called middle Javanese of the *kidung* literature, most of which appears to have been composed on Bali; but it excludes all forms of modern (or proto-modern) Javanese showing "traces of Islamic or Arabic influence", specimens of which can be accurately dated to the end of the 16th century. The exclusive literary nature of old Javanese with its pervasive reliance on Sanskrit root terms, the fact that this language was used by both Javanese and Balinese at different periods over nearly a millennium, the simultaneous existence of all three 'forms' of Javanese - old, middle and modern - virtually as separate language-genres, and the continuing influence of *kawi*-words on modern Javanese despite the rupture with the formal traditions of old Javanese, make it difficult to give a precise focus to an analysis. Fortunately, however, Zoetmulder provides examples with textual references for all the entries in his dictionary, and it is possible therefore to confine an analysis to that vocabulary of kinship that can be fully derived from the *kakawin* literature. In this regard it is particularly interesting to note that despite the ubiquitous use of Sanskrit, the old Javanese kinship system is thoroughly Austronesian. Although there are four terms of Sanskrit derivation in the vocabulary of kinship, these terms are alternate words for recognizable Austronesian kinship categories. The surprising feature of the kinship system, thus, is its evident lack of Sanskrit influence.

Selecting a single kinship system to represent modern Javanese also poses problems. The dialect researches of Nothofer (1980), for example, have uncovered quite a considerable variation in the kinship terms of contiguous dialects in just one part of west central Java. Undoubtedly, if these researches were multiplied for the whole of Java, evidence of further variation in terms would increase dramatically. Until local terminologies are studied in detail, however, such variation in specific terms cannot be taken to indicate different kinship 'systems' but rather the usage of different words to mark appropriate levels of what may be a single system, or at least a set of closely related systems.

The solution that I have adopted for this paper is to rely on the excellent description of the Javanese kinship system provided by Professor Koentjaraningrat for the south central region of the island (1957; 1960: 88-115). This has the singular advantage of representing the court areas of central Java that have tended to set a pattern of refinement for the rest of the population.

The kinship terminology provided by Professor Koentjaraningrat shows an elaboration of distinctions which are difficult to describe concisely. Ultimately, however, these distinctions must be seen as a set of 'resources' from which individuals of different social groups fashion their own particular variants. Social position is an all-important factor in determining not just the speech level of the term to be used in reference but also the configuration of that reference. The subtleties involved are significant. In the principality regions among the upper class, there is a tendency, for example, to mark and maintain distinctions of relative age. Thus a

clear distinction is made between one's parents' elder siblings who are referred to as **uwa** (PeSb) regardless of sex, and one's parents' younger siblings who are differentiated according to gender as **paman** (PyB) and **bibi** (PyZ). Elsewhere this relative age component is often disregarded, and distinction is made simply on the basis of gender. In this case, **paman** may refer to all one's parents' male siblings and **bibi** to all one's parents' female siblings. In some areas (and especially in systems of address as opposed to reference) when relative age needs to be emphasized, this is done by use of the terms 'great' **gedhe** (usually abbreviated to **dhe[k]**) and 'small' **cilik** (abbreviated to **li(k)**) which are applied to **bapa** (abbreviated to **pak**) and **ibu** (**bu**). (In the principality regions, however, especially in elite circles, **pakdhe** and **budhe** may be used to denote 'grandfather' and 'grandmother' respectively: see Koentjaraningrat 1957:84; 1984:273.) In all of these instances, gender and/or relative age are critical distinctions though they are applied in different fashion. Moreover, all of these configurations would probably be recognized as 'Javanese' by Javanese, though not everyone would use them. Interestingly, of these three main configurations, the first configuration (PeSb/PyB/PyZ) is similar to that of old Javanese, suggesting that the system of modern Javanese kinship selected for purposes of comparison in this paper is perhaps the most appropriate.

### Comparisons

Table I provides a comparative list of the relationship terms (both consanguineal and affinal) for old and modern Javanese. The conventional symbols used as specifications stand for recognizable English terms (F=Father, FB=Father's Brother; P=Parent; Sb=Siblings; Sp=Spouse; SpSbSp=Spouse's Sibling's Spouse; e=Elder; y=Younger; m=Male; f=Female; G=Generation. The single exception to this is Z=Sister (from Dutch, **Zuster**). For speech levels, K.I.=Krama Inggil; K=Krama; Ng=Ngoko. Skt indicates words of Sanskrit derivation.

TABLE I

	Specifications	Old Javanese	Modern Javanese
1.	PF	Kaki	Kaki ('Old man')[1]
	PM	Nini	Nini ('Old woman')[1]
	PP		Eyang (K)
	PF		Eyang Kakung, (Pakdhe)
	PM		Eyang Putri, (Budhe)
	PP		Mbah (Ng)
2.	PF		Mbah Lanang
	PM		Mbah Wedok
	F / (FB,MB)	Rāma	Rama (K.I.)
	F	Bapa	Bapa (K)
	FeB, MeB		Pak Gedhe (Pakdhe)
	FyB, MyB		Pak Cilik (Paklik)

	Specifications	Old Javanese	Modern Javanese
	F/M F	Yayah ('older relative') Pitā (Skt)	(Ayah)
3.	M M M M	Ina (Inang, Rena) Bibi Idung/Idang	(Bibi)  Biyung/Biyang (Regional)
	M (MZ, FZ, MBW, FZW) MeZ, FeZ MyZ, FyZ	Ibu	Ibu (K) Ibu Gedhe (Budhe) Ibu Cilik (Bulik)
	M, MZ, FZ MeZ, FeZ MyZ, FyZ		Mbok (Ng) Mbok Gedhe Mbok Cilik
	M	Māta (SKT)	
4.	PeSb (PeSbSp)	Uwa	Uwa
5.	PyB (PB)	Paman	Paman (Paman)
6.	PyZ  PyZ (PZ)	Penan[2]	  Bibi (Bibi)
7.	eSb eB eB	Kaka (Raka)	Raka (K.I.) Kakang
8.	eZ		Mbakyu (Mbak)
9.	ySb yB yZ ySb ySb	Ari (Rari)  Anten (Ranten)	Adhi Adhi Lanang Adhi Wedok[3]  Rayi (K.I.)
10.	Sb '1st Cousins'	Sanak	Sanak ('Relative') Nak Sanak
	Sb	Sodara (Skt)	Sederek (K: 'Relative') Sedulur (N: 'Relative')
	B		Sedulur Lanang
	Z		Sedulur Wedok



	Specifications	Old Javanese	Modern Javanese
	'1st Cousins'	(Sanak) Amisan	
	'2nd Cousins'	(Sanak) Amindo	
	'2nd Cousins'		Misanan
	'3rd Cousins'	(Sanak) Amingtiga	
	'3rd Cousins'		Amindoan
11.	C	Weka	
	C	Putra (Skt)	Putra (K.I.)
	C	Anak	Anak
	S		Anak Lanang
	D		Anak Wedok
12.	SbC	Kapwanakan	Keponakan
	Sbs		Keponakan Lanang
	SbD		Keponakan Wedok
	C of 1st Cousin		Keponakan Misanan
	C of 2nd Cousin		Keponakan Mindoan
	SbC		Keponakan (K)
13.	Sp		Garwa (K.I.)
	Sp		Semah (K)
	Sp	Somah	Somah (N)
	Sp		Bojo (Ng)
	W	Bi, Bini, Wini, Babini, Rabi[4]	
	W		Rayi
	H	Laki[4]	
	H		Raka
14.	SpP	Rama Tuha	
	SpP		Marasepuh (K)
	SpP		Maratuwa (Mertuwa) (N)
	HF, WF		Meratuwa Lanang (Bapak)
	KW, WM		Meratuwa Wedok (Ibu)
15.	C Sp	Mantu	Mantu
	DH		Mantu Lanang
	SW		Mantu Wedok
16.	SpSb	Ipe[2]	Ipe
	SpeB		Kakang Ipe
	SpeZ		Mbakyu Ipe
	SpSb		Adhi Ipe
17.	SpSbSp	Paripeyan	Pripe(an)
18.	CSpP	Warang	
	CSpP		Besan
19.	CC	Putu	Putu
	CC		Wayah (K.I.)

	Specifications	Old Javanese	Modern Javanese
20.	G ± 3	Buyut	Buyut
	G ± 4	Cicik [5]	Canggih
	(G ± 4)	Pitung[5]	
	G ± 5	Anggas[5]	Wareng
	G ± 6	Muning[5]	Udheg-Udheg
	G ± 7	Krepek[5]	Gantung Siwur
	G ± 8		Gropek Sente
	G ± 9		Debok Bosok
	G ± 10		Galih Asem

- 
1. **Kaki** and **nini** are not exclusively confined as referents to the second ascending generation; they may also be used to refer to descending generations, in the sense of **anak** or **putu**. Thus, for example, in the wayang, Kresna or Janaka may refer to Gatotkaca as 'Kaki Gatotkaca' meaning **anak**; or Narada may refer to Kresna as 'Kaki Kresna' or to Sumbadra as 'Nini Sumbadra' meaning **putu**. I am grateful to Dr Soewito-Santoso for this point.
  2. According to information from Dr S. Supomo, **penan** and **ipe** (for sister and sister-in-law) may be interchanged in old Javanese.
  3. **Wadon** can be substituted for **wedok** as a somewhat higher term for 'female'.
  4. **Rabi** can mean 'to take a wife'; just as **laki** can mean 'to take a husband'. In old Javanese, **rabi** also has the meaning 'to copulate'.
  5. After the third ascending/descending generation ( $G \pm 3$ ), there is some ambiguity in precise arrangement and reference of the terms used to denote subsequent generations.

The first and most obvious point about this list is that there are far more modern Javanese terms than there are old Javanese terms. (In fact this list could be further extended if all terms of address were included in it.) One reason for this is that the modern Javanese list includes alternative terms used at two or sometimes three different levels (Krama Inggil, Krama and Ngoko); another reason is that many terms may form other terms by the addition of further modifiers. The old Javanese list also includes variant terms with identical specifications, but these are mainly phonetic variants. In those cases where distinct variants occur, we can only speculate about their significance. These differences serve to emphasize that this comparison is between the relatively fixed forms of a literary language and those of a living language still in the process of development.

Figure 1 is a representation of the consanguineal terminology of old Javanese. Like almost all Austronesian terminologies, it can be clearly organized into discrete generations. Thus the third ascending and third descending generations ( $G \pm 3$ ) are marked by the same term.

The second descending generation (G-2) is similarly distinguished by generation alone, while the second ascending generation (G+2) is distinguished by a combination of generation and gender. In the first ascending generation (G+1), relative age figures prominently. Parents are distinguished from their siblings and according to gender; elder siblings of both father and mother by relative age; younger siblings by relative age and gender. In the first descending generation (G-1), the only distinction is that between siblings' children and one's own. Finally, in ego's generation (G), siblings are distinguished from the siblings of one's parents' siblings, and these siblings are graded according to relative age without regard to gender. Thus the terminology is thoroughly cognatic with emphasis placed on distinguishing sibling sets in crucial generations primarily according to relative age.

FIGURE I  
Old Javanese Consanguineal Terminology

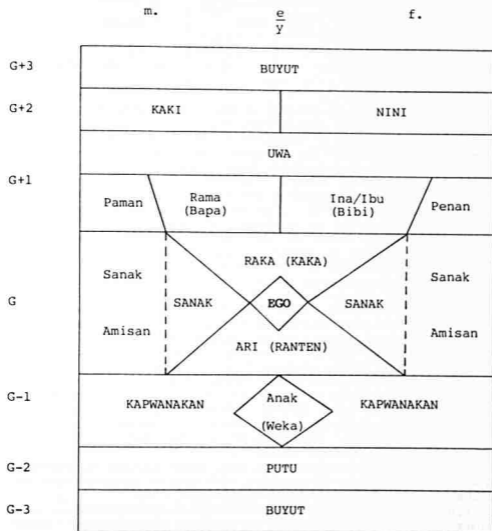


Figure II shows the old Javanese affinal terminology. Its patterning also follows generational lines. Like the consanguineal terminology, the affinal terminology implies discrete family units. To their children's spouses, parents-in-law assume a position analogous to the one they hold in relation to their own children. The siblings of a married couple are denoted but without regard to relative age or gender, as are also the separately denoted spouses of these siblings. Of special interest is the relationship between the two sets of parents-in-law who are linked via the married couple and refer to each other reciprocally as *warang*.

FIGURE II  
Old Javanese Affinal Terminology

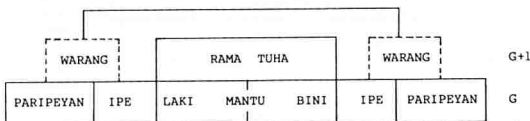
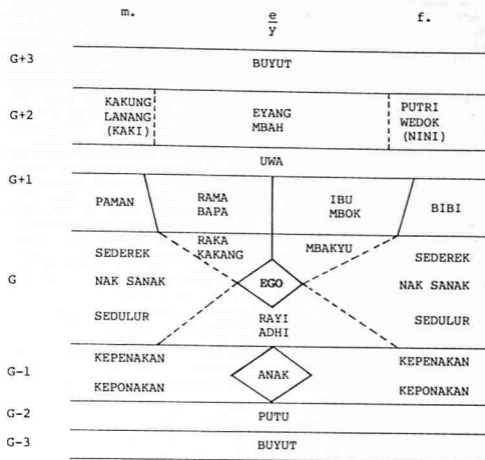


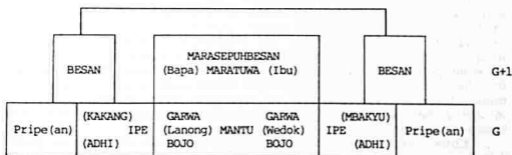
Figure III is a representation of the consanguineal terminology of modern Javanese. This figure requires comparison with Figure I. Despite the proliferation of additional terms to designate relatives at different speech levels, the semantic organization of the modern Javanese terminology is remarkably close to that of old Javanese. The differences are relatively minor. The third ascending and descending generations (G+3) are identical as are the first (G-1) and the second descending generations (G-2). The second ascending generation (G+2) has come to be marked by a single generational term (or rather separate generational terms at two speech levels) but this term (or terms) can be modified by gender terms. Besides this, terms similar to those of old Javanese are still used colloquially. Semantically, the first ascending generation (G+1) shows no change, though the relationship between alternate terms for the same category of relative varies and *bibi* has seen a shift from M to PyZ. (Apparently within the court, *bibi* can still be used as an address term for 'mother' by a concubine's children whose official mother is the first wife [see Horne 1974:75] but this is increasingly regarded as derogatory.) Significant, though minor, changes have occurred in ego's generation. Here the category for elder sibling (*kaka*, *raka*) has become distinguished by gender. *Raka* or *kaka(ng)* which in old Javanese was the general term for the elder sibling, refers in modern Javanese to the elder male sibling, while the term *mbakyu* (from *mbok ayu*) refers to the elder female sibling. Moreover, the category *sanak*, which in old Javanese referred to siblings alone, has come to refer to both siblings and cousins and, in accordance with this, elder/younger categories are used in wider reference. If anything, this may be taken to imply some extension to the definition of the family unit.

Figure IV shows the affinal terminology of modern Javanese whose semantic organization is basically the same as old Javanese. Gender

**FIGURE III**  
**Modern Javanese Consanguineal Terminology**



**FIGURE IV**  
**Modern Javanese Affinal Terminology**



and relative age terms, however, may be used to differentiate these basic categories.

Another feature of old Javanese kinship that deserves comment is its array of generational terms. Old Javanese shows clearly distinguished generations and it marks these generations to a considerable depth. Besides generation, kinship terms in the first and second ascending generation are also distinguished by gender; thus, old Javanese has **rama** and **ina** or **bapa** and **ibu** (F and M), **kaki** and **nini** (PF and PM). Terms in the first and second descending generations, however, are not distinguished by gender, thus **anak** (C) and **putu** (CC), although gender may be specified, if necessary, by adjectives for 'male' and 'female'. Beyond this second generation, all terms which extend to the seventh generation are purely generational.

In old Javanese, the third ascending and descending generation is denoted by the same generational term, **buyut**, creating the impression of a categorical identity between predecessors and descendants. In modern Javanese, the same generational term, **buyut**, is used to initiate a categorical identity of generations that is maintained to the tenth generation. (This categorical identity or symmetry of generations is a common feature in Austronesian kinship but rarely is it developed to the extent it is among the Javanese.) In old Javanese, however, this categorical identity between distant generations is somewhat ambiguous. The occurrence of such terms, which is mainly in the texts of ancient charters, does not always follow a consistent order. Moreover and more importantly, when these terms are invoked as a kind of litany, predecessors appear to be clearly distinguished from descendants. Thus, for example, a common litany of predecessors cited by Zoetmulder (1982:1373) is '**bapa, kaki, buyut, pitung, anggag, muning, krepek**' whereas a litany of descendants is '**anak, putu, buyut, cicik, muning, pitung, anggag**' (Zoetmulder 1982:325).

A number of inferences may perhaps be drawn from this aspect of old Javanese kinship, especially in regard to the creation of dynasties. Dynasties are, above all, concerned with the succession of generations. Possessing a long line of predecessors is as important as envisioning a long line of successors. Old Javanese kinship provides the categorical basis for such lines. What is interestingly Austronesian - or perhaps even Southeast Asian - is that, in contrast to similar generational lines in India (or, for that matter, in many African lineage systems), this generational line is not an exclusive male line, but rather, after two generations, a line that is not denoted by sex at all. This is all the more striking since Hindu Javanese society recognized the category of **pitṛ** (pl: **pitaras**), 'forefathers' (from the Sanskrit for 'father') and the rites of śrāddha performed in their honour (Zoetmulder 1982:1372). Yet despite this Hindu model, ancestors, as indeed descendants, beyond the second generation, are categorically genderless. From this it is perhaps possible to argue that were a dynasty to be perpetuated at some point through a female ancestor, this factor is only relevant for the immediate generations. This would seem to place a two- or, at most, three-generation limit on disputes over dynastic succession involving male or female lines. Thereafter, the gender of lines would become irrelevant.

Thus, for ancient Javanese society there is no need to posit a full-fledged lineage system to take cognizance of dynasties claiming

great ancestral depth. The evidence on old Javanese kinship points to a cognatic or bilateral system capable of creating descent lines by recourse to relative age and which is able to order these lines in terms of a succession of generations. This system indicates, as the history of ancient Javanese society suggests, that considerable flexibility in descent reckoning, through either male or female lines, is by no means inconsistent with long legitimizing dynastic genealogies.

### Conclusions

Two conclusions can be drawn from this brief discussion. The first is that the old Javanese kinship system is entirely Austronesian and, in its basic categorical structure, shows little if any Sanskrit influence; indeed certain of its features are contrary to the Indian model. The second is that the semantic structure of modern Javanese is much like that of old Javanese and shows a development from it. This is a conclusion that I think few Javanese would find surprising, but it should serve to check speculation that ancient Java had a radically different kinship organization from the present. In anthropological terms, the present Javanese kinship system is classified as 'cognatic' and the old Javanese system must be classified in the same way. If one were to speculate on even earlier forms, the terms **rama** (F) and **paman** (MB, FB) suggest common derivation from proto-Austronesian **ama**, which might then be reconstructed with the specifications  $F=FB=MB$ ; similarly, **rena** and **penan** suggest derivation from **ina** with the specification  $M=MZ=FZ$ . (This can be accounted for by the use of the honorific prefix, **ra**, for F and M and the prefix plus affix, **pa - n**, for PyB and PyZ). These equations would indicate an even more 'cognatic' system and suggest an historical development toward greater lineality with particular elaboration of relative age categories.

## NOTES

- \* I would like to express my thanks to all the members of the Conference who offered comments on this paper. In particular, I would like to thank Professor O.W. Wolters for his suggestions on how I might develop the argument of the paper. In preparing this final version, I have benefited greatly from the comments and corrections that I received from Professor P.J. Zoetmulder, Dr Soewito-Santoso and Dr S. Supomo. I thank each of them for taking the trouble to go over my earlier draft so carefully.

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# 18

## Sources on Economic Activities in Khmer and Cham Lands

Claude Jacques

Until recent years, scholars have not been very much attracted to specific research work on ancient economic activities in Cambodia, or at least only a few papers specially devoted to this subject have been published. Reasons for this have been given: source material had first to be published, an historical framework established, etc. Of course, these are not bad reasons, but it must be added that this research work appears to be very difficult since the sources, when viewed in entirety, seem especially difficult to interpret.

However, in the past various authors have given their opinions on the ancient economy, but it is easy to show that these opinions are often not very realistic, as they are based more on general, and if I may make so bold as to say, preconceived ideas on this civilization, rather than on facts. For example, it is a current idea that the Khmer society, which was able to make Angkor and all its wonders, was basically different from that of modern Cambodia, and it is apparent that old Khmer society is explained more appropriately through ancient Egyptian society[1] than through the comparatively well known Khmer society at the end of XIXth century. The firm belief of the present author is that such a postulation must be rejected, and without denying an evolution which is simply normal, the structure of the Khmer society at the beginning of the French protectorate naturally follows that of Angkorean society. In any case, nothing seems to hinder seriously this opinion and it provides a better hypothesis with which to commence an analysis.

Research into the economic activities of this society must include many elements which I am probably unable to appreciate properly. As an epigraphist, I shall attempt to dwell on the area with which I am most familiar, which should not imply that I consider it the most important source.

The Khmer and Cham lands will be dealt with separately. I wished to mention both of them in the title because I think the unfortunate Champa has been ignored for many years. But it is true that I know Khmer epigraphy far better and that in any case, Cham epigraphy, different from the Khmer, offers even less information about economic activities. Consequently I shall be very brief on this last subject.

Before commencing the study of inscriptions, it is important to consider the nature of Khmer epigraphy and what therefore can be

expected reasonably from it. Some years ago, I had the opportunity of expounding on the most desirable type of research which might be carried out into the history of the ancient Khmer land.[2] At that time I examined the general content of inscriptions and I take the liberty of repeating the conclusions now.

In my opinion, the overwhelming majority of Sanskrit poem inscriptions of the ancient Khmer territory are prayers to the divinities of **Indian origin**, which explains the use of this language. They have been cut in stone in order to remind the gods of a king or a commoner who has made religious foundations or endowments, probably after his death. In actual fact concrete data given in those poems are comparatively scanty. Of course, they mention the name of the deity in the temple and often the date of his consecration. In addition to kings' names, occasionally with the date of their accession to the throne and the names of their ascendants who give them some right to the throne, we may find the names of the commoner benefactors with their titles, sometimes their birth-place and the names of their ancestors. More rarely, a list of all the pious deeds of the benefactor is given. Moreover, it seems that behind the **kāvya** of these poems many allusions to contemporary events are hidden. In a few cases, these can nevertheless be elucidated. That is to say, on the whole these poems give data which is valuable, since we cannot get them elsewhere, yet scarce. Especially on economic activities, there is little chance of finding helpful data, yet in the case of a few Sanskrit inscriptions, particularly the big steles of Yaśovarman I and of Jayavarman VII, one may obtain information on the economy.

When written in Khmer, inscriptions are in prose and are more fertile, as they mostly concern properties or servants of the temples. Before trying to draw overall conclusions on the country from those texts, however, it is necessary to understand why the inscriptions have been cut and to study them carefully in order to extract from them the greatest amount of data.

The essential fact which must never be forgotten is that without exception **all** these inscriptions were placed in temples or sacred areas, which implies that they are concerned directly either with the gods (if they are in Sanskrit) or with the administration of gods' properties (if they are in Khmer); and that is precisely confirmed by the reading of these texts. Therefore any facts regarding secular administration or property must be considered incidental, and any generalization based on circumstances alluded to in these inscriptions has to be made very cautiously.

From the part played in temple life by certain high dignitaries - consequently considered as top civil servants - an attempt has often been made to infer their actual office in civil life.[3] For example, the name of **rājakulamahāmantri** is found in some inscriptions belonging to the Rājendravarman and Jayavarman V reigns; G. Coedès translated this title 'great adviser of the royal family' and therefore supposed this man 'played the role of a regent or prime minister'.[4] In fact, the title has to be cut into two parts: **rājakula** 'parent of a king' and **mahāmantri** 'great adviser'. Nothing more can be drawn from the inscriptions, only that he might have belonged to the central administration, as he is shown acting in any part of the empire.[5]

We can only suppose that the state administration in ancient times was not greatly different from that of the XIXth century. In fact, it

is not even possible to piece together the advisory board of the king from all the known inscriptions. We know very little about the actual offices of the high dignitaries of the kingdom, and are forced into ignorance of how a province or a town was governed.

Regarding the organization of the ancient Khmer society, there is once again factual ignorance. We know that there was no hereditary nobility; yet it is easy to note from the large number of temples dedicated to ancestors (but not necessarily to those who were high dignitaries) that lineage had a great importance in itself. The long lists of personal names of *khñum* ('slaves') in some inscriptions, together with the existence of so many temples, induces one to describe this society as 'theocratic', based upon a considerable amount of slavery. Nevertheless, I have pointed out elsewhere[6] that those people were probably slaves of gods, not of men (there was also a well-attested slavery, but in this case, personal names were never included). This theory regarding the 'god slaves' - which may not be agreed to, as I am aware that I am unable to solve all the problems set out by the data of epigraphy - seems important because it implies a general view of the ancient Khmer society which is completely different from the usual one. If one assumes, as I do, that 'slaves' referred to by name on the stones were just pious villagers honoured by these citations placed before the god, ancient temples may easily be imagined to be similar to modern Khmer Buddhist temples, where a short while ago, villagers came to work unrestrainedly if the need arose.

It must not be forgotten that the density of ancient temples, very high in some regions like Angkor, is far less so in others. This does not necessarily mean that the latter areas were uninhabited. They might have been inhabited by poorer peoples who could not build temples with long-lasting material. The lighter sanctuaries of these villagers might have disappeared from these regions just as they may have disappeared from regions where stone temples are still seen. This reminds us how partial our view of ancient Khmer society is, especially since many temples have no inscriptions at all.

In a recent book,[7] Professor O.W. Wolters has developed a very interesting theory regarding the political structure in ancient Southeast Asia. He sees this region as 'a patchwork of often overlapping *maṇḍalas*' or 'circles of kings'. 'In practice', he adds, 'the *maṇḍala* (a Sanskrit term used in Indian manuals of government) represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries and where smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security.' It is obvious that the Khmer lands before Angkor showed just such a divided structure, consisting of a number of small kingdoms. From Jayavarman II to Rājendravarman, all the Khmer kings more or less successfully tried gradually to unite those *maṇḍalas* under their rule - which probably means they merely made them pay a tribute. Rājendravarman, who was at first merely the king of the *maṇḍala* Bhavapura, seems to have made great reforms in administration, transforming the ancient kingdoms into *viṣayas*, 'provinces', perhaps with a centralization of services in Angkor. In fact neither he, nor any of his successors were able to realize the centralization of which he dreamt. From the inscriptions it emerges clearly enough that regional rebellions were seldom absent in the Angkorean period, and the **Royal Chronicles**, not

to speak of some present-day reports, tell of many such rebellions against the central power. I am sure it would not be going too far to say that they have been endemic in the Khmer land from the very beginning of history.

It is important to investigate sources on the economy bearing in mind the social and political context, and the aim of inscriptions. To begin with, it might be considered highly surprising that no allusion has yet been made to the economic relevance, which seems primordial to so many historians, of huge artificial lakes or *bārāys* in Angkor or elsewhere. Moreover, there is no allusion at all to the largest of them, dug to the west of the capital. Certainly this alone could not mean that these lakes had no part in water storage or irrigation. However, it is interesting to note that after so many pages devoted to enhancing the utilitarian part played by artificial lakes and canals, an agronomist, Mr J. Van Liere, has come at last to explain that, in his opinion, there were in Angkor two great hydraulic systems, with no connection between them; 'one at the level of the productive, profane farmer and one at the level of the theocratic superstructure'.[8] Obviously this authoritative opinion - at least on agronomy and the importance of water, since on religion, he just repeats what has been written by others - leads us to review our previous appreciation of the problem. It can also prompt us towards caution on subjects the data of which are not properly controlled for some reason or another.

Everybody agrees the Angkorean economy was based only upon agriculture, but to whom did the lands belong? Of course, we know that the king was probably their 'eminent owner' at that time just as he was recently in Cambodia and in Thailand. Inscriptions often report that a land acquisition was allowed by a royal decree. But a question arises: did all land acquisitions have to be permitted by the king, or was a royal decree only required on some solemn occasions, particularly when temples of some importance acquired lands? On rare occasions, inscriptions even relate a ceremony in which fields were demarcated in detail.[9] In my opinion, however, the reason for this type of ceremony was that in theory the land was acquired by the god for eternity; and ordinary land exchanges between men did not necessarily involve such solemnity. In the same way, solemn curses upon anyone who might destroy or steal anything in the temple are often found at the end of inscriptions precisely because they were the property of gods.

Inscriptions testify to the existence of landowners, as they show them selling and buying ricefields or orchards. But is it necessary to view the Khmer territory as being divided between owners of huge estates, among which were certainly the temples, and therefore conclude that there were hardly any smallholders? This is the widely held opinion. A reason for its popularity is that the first research workers were impressed by the long lists of 'slaves' cut into the walls of some temples; everything is obviously different, if these lists are to be interpreted in the manner I suggest. The large landholder view also finds comfort in inscriptions such as that of the Prah Khan temple of Angkor. It is said there that together royal temples supported 306,372 people, divided into 13,500 *grāmas* ('hamlets'),[10](that is to say an average of 23 people per *grāma*, a figure which implies a habitat as scattered as that existing in recent times); those *grāmas* were

'given by the king and "hamlet owners"', [11] without any further definition which prevents us from knowing how many 'hamlets' were given either by the king or by landowners, or how many 'hamlet owners' there were. The king may have given comparatively few *grāmas* and those 'hamlet owners' were not necessarily very important landowners. We may also note that such an association between the king and commoners into a religious foundation does not seem to be attested before Jayavarman VII and could be an innovation of that king. Therefore the possibility of a fairly large class of small landholders in ancient Khmer lands should certainly not be rejected without further investigation.

When ricefields are said to be bought or sold, there is often an indication of area and of prices. But these prices are very difficult to appraise, since there was no money in the ancient Khmer land; prices are given in gold or silver ingot, bronzeware or copperware (often spittoons), clothes, cattle, sometimes slaves (which I take to mean true slaves); even comparisons are not easy to make. Areas are sometimes given with boundaries or with figures but then the unit of measurement may be missing, rendering the figures useless. Sometimes the amount of rice which may be sown in an area is given. As far as I know, nobody has attempted to estimate the area of ricefields given to temples, yet this may give a good indication of the extent of temple properties. I think we may have to admit that the average size of the estates was not as large as has been generally thought.

Lineage temples probably constituted a fairly large group of sanctuaries. They are only prominent at the beginning of the XIth century, because at that time it appears that a custom dictated that inscriptions recalling the great men of the lineage were cut there; but these temples also existed long before that time, since these inscriptions state that a temple foundation may date back to the time of Jayavarman II, or even earlier. In that case again, we must not forget that through inscriptions we know only the temples of the wealthy lineages, which were able to build a sanctuary with long-lasting materials; but smaller temples built with light materials certainly existed too, and unfortunately these have disappeared without trace. To take the most famous one as an example, it is very likely that the Sdok Kak Thom temple, which preceded the one erected in 1053 AD, where the well-known inscription and the central divinity, Jayendrarvarmeśvara were found, was much less solid, and that might be the reason why it was destroyed during the war in the beginning of Sūryavarman I's reign.

While these lineage temples have not been studied as such, they may have played an important part in the economy, at first merely because they sustained some more or less important patrimony through the ages. They consisted of one or more towers accommodating the Hindu gods, as shown by inscriptions, and most probably also included something like an ancestor sanctuary. These have not been alluded to in inscriptions, but their existence may be inferred in all likelihood from modern equivalents. The property attached to those temples was apparently managed by a member of the lineage, who held the title of *mūla*; he must have been the head of the lineage, but was not inevitably the most illustrious member of it. [12] Temple property seems to have been inalienable, except of course when the lineage died out (and then its property was said to be *sūnya*, 'deserted,

empty'); however, two lineages might be associated, and no doubt even co-managed by two men called *kanlah mūla*. [13] Often, the lineage decided to join its sanctuary with a bigger 'state' temple; in this way many lineage temples were joined with the Bhadrēśvara temple at Vat Phu, and this 'association' was distinguished by a benefit, generally rice, offered by the smaller temple to the bigger one which no doubt must have given spiritual benefits in return.

Looking again through this paper, I am afraid a reader will be disappointed, as I have confined my remarks to what is actually read in inscriptions, and little information on general economic activities is given there. I could certainly have described the offerings of food which were made to the gods in the temples since some inscriptions give details on this; [14] men would probably have eaten this food after the gods had been spiritually nourished by it. But here again we touch on the imperfection of our sources: for instance, we know that fish and rice are modern Khmer staples. Unfortunately, Indian gods did not eat fish, and nothing is to be found about it in inscriptions. Yet it can be supposed that for many years Khmers have eaten fresh local fish, which is probably economically less important, but have also consumed fish preserved in brine, presently called *prahok*, the production on the banks of Tonle Sap river and the supply throughout the country of which was the occasion of great yearly movements of population not long ago.

Inscriptions are certainly not the only sources on economic activities in ancient Khmer lands. It has been seen above that well-informed studies on hydraulic problems carried out by competent scholars might be fruitful, or at least help to clarify the matter. Other subjects could be scanned for information; for instance, I am not sure whether any special study on the roads in ancient Cambodia has been carried out, although roads have been noted from the very beginning of Khmer studies. Furthermore, there are good reasons for thinking that regions were generally for self-sufficiency, given the organization in *maṅḍalas*; and although we know that Khmers travelled at least through their own country, it is not certain that inter-regional trade was highly developed. This might help explain the fact ancient Khmers did not feel the need for money.

To comment with certainty on the economic activities in the ancient Khmer lands is a rather difficult undertaking. However, some specific points certainly deserve thorough investigation in the epigraphy and other sources, to help us learn about this economy. Priority must be given to this kind of research work; useful theorizing may come later.

Regarding the Cham lands, I shall keep my comments brief. The condition of the epigraphical documentation is here very poor: many known inscriptions (exactly 125 out of 206) have not yet been published, and those which have been published need to be studied again. In fact, owing to lack of research in this field, no Cham inscription has been published since 1928. The present writer has begun to study some published inscriptions thoroughly; but work only proceeds slowly and nothing is yet ready for publication. Furthermore, besides the inscriptions which are available in Paris as rubbings, I am not sure that the present Vietnamese government is likely to favour field research on ancient Cham civilization. (Professor Tran Quoc Vuong has protested against this supposition, and reports that Vietnamese and

Polish archaeologists have been working on the restoration of Mi-son monuments. Of course, I am very glad to hear this news.)

First of all, while they have a similar religious nature, there is quite a difference between Khmer and Cham epigraphy, concerning content as well as form. A good part of Sanskrit is written in prose, and both prose and poems are very often of rather poor quality. As for Cham prose, it appears comparatively late, about the IXth century. Thereafter, it becomes more and more common, and eventually replaces Sanskrit completely. Sanskrit prose sometimes comes in between stanzas as if to comment on them. In Sanskrit inscriptions, the same content is found as in Cambodia; moreover Cham authors were not afraid of confessing the reverses of their own country, to tell the truth before relating their revenge: so we hear about Khmer attacks, the general objective of which seems to have been plundering rather than conquest. When in Cham, inscriptions usually have a content similar to those in Sanskrit; yet short inventories of objects or lists of ricefields given to the temple can sometimes be found. Details of land transactions, however, are never given. On the whole, therefore, it must be noted that data on economy are few and hardly usable.

Politically, it emerges from inscriptions that the Cham lands have probably been divided more often than not; specifically the distinction between Campa and Pāṇḍuraṅga was always made carefully in inscriptions; and we know that Campā was composed of several kingdoms, Vijaya being the most important of them. Here again, and more than in the Khmer land, *maṅḍalas* are shown separately, and often fighting against each other. In fact, the dream of any king of subjecting the other Cham states to his rule was fulfilled only on rather infrequent occasions. The 'Cham people' were often mentioned as the great enemy of the Khmers. Expressed in this way, it is certainly incorrect. It should be better to say that **some** Chams sometimes fought against **some** Khmers, and from that point of view, the history of the relations between those two countries in the XII-XIIIth centuries has to be revised, although it is not easy to trace.

As far as the economy is concerned, the political situation may not have favoured self-sufficiency, since, unlike the Angkorean empire, the Cham states faced the sea. This fact suggests the existence of international trade, though no trace of it is found in inscriptions. On this subject, other sources beyond the scope of this paper, such as Chinese or Vietnamese annals, may be referred to.

Curiously enough, the weakness of the documentation has not discouraged all researchers: some twelve years ago, a thesis on the economy of ancient Champa was submitted.[15] This investigation was very carefully worked out from epigraphical, ethnological and geographical sources; yet it has not been published to date. I see here another sign of the general lack of interest in Cham studies.

## NOTES

1. Cf. Leonid Sedov, 'La société angkoriennne et le mode de production asiatique', in *Sur le mode de production asiatique*, Paris, 1974, p.327-43.
2. Cf. my paper at the VIIIth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Kuala Lumpur, 1980, 'About the method in Khmer history', and my 'Nouvelles orientations pour l'étude de l'histoire du pays khmer' in *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien (ASEMI)*, XIII, 1982, pp.39-57.
3. Many instances might be found in S. Sahai, *Les institutions politique et l'organisation administrative du Cambodge ancien*, Paris, EFEO, 1970; still this author often sums up widely held views.
4. Cf. G. Coedès, *Les états hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie*, 3rd ed., Paris, 1964, p.217, or *Indianized States ...*, Honolulu, 1967, p.116.
5. Cf. *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient (BEFEO)* LVII, pp.58-60.
6. Cf. *Actes du Congrès international des Orientalistes, Asie du Sud-Est continentale*, Paris, 1976, pp.71-6, and *Early South East Asia*, Oxford, 1979, pp. 423 and 426.
7. *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Singapore, 1982, especially chapter II (I quote pp.16-7).
8. 'Traditional water management in the lower Mekong Basin', in *World Archaeology*, vol.II, no.3, Feb. 1980, pp.265-80; I quote p.280.
9. Cf. the Prasat Kok Po inscription K 814: BEFEO XXXVII, pp.399 and 412.
10. Praḥ Khan stele K 908, st. CLXXVII, totalizing st. LXXIII and CXXI and st. LXXIV and CXLII (cf. BEFEO XLI, pp.255-301). It may be noticed that people here are never called 'slaves', but 'servants of gods'.
11. Ibid., st. LXXIII and CXXI.
12. For instance, in the Prasat Beñ inscription K 969 (face B, 1.38-39), a *mūla* from the Battambang region is said to have left this own responsibility, because the king had appointed him to an important office in Angkor. Cf. *Inscriptions du Cambodge (IC)* VII, pp.177 and 185.
13. That is: 'half *mūla*'. Cf. the Prasat Car inscription K 257 N, 1.26; the expression had bothered G. Coedès: cf. IC IV, pp.145 and 150.
14. For instance, in the Praḥ Khan inscription K 908 (st. XLIV-XLIX and LII-LXXVIII), or the Prasat Beñ inscription K 969 (face B, 1.39-49; face C, 1.1-9). See notes 10 and 12 above.
15. David D. Sox, *Resource-use systems of ancient Champa*, a thesis submitted to the graduate division of the University of Hawaii in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in geography, September 1972.



## Narrative Bas-Reliefs at Candi Surawana

Peter Worsley

### Introduction

Hayam Wuruk visited a temple called Śurabhāṇa in 1361 A.D. and stayed there overnight. If Krom and Bernet Kempers are correct, this same temple was still an important royal shrine at the end of the fourteenth century and in the early years of the fifteenth century. The *Nāgarakṛtāgama* mentions Śurabhāṇa together with Tigawangi in the same strophe, referring to both as recent foundations of two princes of the royal family. This work, written in 1364, links Śurabhāṇa closely with Hayam Wuruk's uncle by marriage, Wijayarājasa, the then ruler of Wengker. Krom has suggested that the monument was the "burial temple (graftempel)" of this Javanese nobleman. The *Nāgarakṛtāgama* does not make this clear however. The *Pararaton* informs us that he died in 1388 A.D. and was enshrined at a place called Manyar in a temple by the name of Wiṣṇubhawanapura. According to Krom, this was the official name of Śurabhāṇa. Bernet Kempers has added that Wijayarājasa's enshrinement is unlikely to have taken place until 1400 A.D., twelve years after his death when his *śrāddha* ceremony would normally have been held.[1]

In his lifetime Wijayarājasa appears to have enjoyed a position of considerable influence and power. According to an inscription from Kandangan he was the ruler (*prabhu*) of Matuhan in 1350. He appears to have passed this title and office over to his son-in-law by 1364, when according to the *Nāgarakṛtāgama* he was already the ruler (*prabhu*) of Wengker. As a close kinsman of the ruling monarchs Queen Tribuwatunggadewī and Rājasanagara Dyah Hayam Wuruk, and as ruler of Matahun and then of Wengker, he presided over his own patrimonial court and enjoyed very nearly complete independence in his own lands. More than this, however, he appears also to have exercised considerable influence in the affairs of state of the central court of Majapahit itself. In the capital he occupied a separate palace to the east of that of Hayam Wuruk, and is described in the *Nāgarakṛtāgama* as having an interest in the welfare and prosperity of the whole of Java. He appears also to have borne an important responsibility for the recording of peasant freeholds (*thāni*) and of districts (*deśa*) and to have encouraged the construction of roads, buildings and foundations. These are all activities which one might



1. Candi Surawana from the west.



2. Candi Surawana from the south.

have expected of one of the powerful local rulers in the Majapahit state structure. However, a number of inscriptions which were issued on the authority of Wijayarājasa, make it clear that, whatever power he was able to exercise in Matahun and then later in Wengker, he also had authority in areas close to the capital of Majapahit. Moreover the charter issued on his authority in January 1384 concerning Bali and which ascribes to him the extremely high title of **Srī mahārāja rāja paramēśwara** can leave us in little doubt as to the importance of the man. Indeed it seems, so powerful was he, that by 1377 the Chinese imperial court knew him as the virtually independent eastern king of Java, one who was able to maintain his own separate diplomatic ties with the imperial court. It seems then that political divisions within the royal family, which led finally to the outbreak of hostilities in 1406, might have ultimately derived from the powerful position which Wijayarājasa had made for himself by the later reign of Rājasanagara Dyah Hayam Wuruk.[2]

### The narrative bas-reliefs

Today Candi Surawana stands in the village of Bloran near Pare to the northeast of Kediri in eastern Java. All that remains of the temple is its base, which is constructed of andesite and rests on a foundation of bricks. One must assume that the superstructure was once made of stone and has since been carried off and used for other purposes, or, as is suggested by the representation of temples on bas-reliefs found on eastern Javanese temples, that the cella and roof were made of wood and atap.[3]

The ground plan of the temple base is 7.80 metres square. On its western side a porch extends towards the west in three stages, each one narrower than the former. Into the western end of this porch is built the stairway, which would have led up to the cella [Photo 1]. The dimensions of the porch are not given in the literature. The vertical cross-section of the base consists of two sections: a foot 1.38 metres in height and above the foot a further section which rises another 3.20 metres. There are bas-reliefs on both the foot and the upper section of the temple base [Photo 2]. In both cases they extend along the foot and the upper part of the walls of the western porch and staircase. The reliefs on the foot appear to represent **Tantri** stories or scenes from other similar compendiums of tales. On the larger reliefs on the upper section of the base, scenes from three narratives are depicted. They are the **Arjunawiwāha**, the **Sri Tañjung** and the story of **Bubuksa** and **Gagak-Aking**.

When van Stein Callenfels wrote his article "De Mintaraga-Bas-reliefs aan de Oudjavaansche Bouwwerken" in 1925, he reflected an opinion which has been unquestioned until now when he spoke of the lack of consistency on the part of the sculptors in the manner in which they had ordered the reliefs on the upper section of the walls of the temple base. Speaking in particular of the **Arjunawiwāha**, he concurred with Krom's earlier judgement that the sculptors had deviated from the correct narrative sequence. The judgement of these two scholars was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that they were not able to identify all three narratives on the upper section of the walls of the temple base. By the time van Stein Callenfels wrote his article in 1925, only the **Arjunawiwāha** and the story of **Bubuksa** and **Gagak-Aking** had been

identified. Van Stein Callenfels was also aware that there was a third story which also appeared together with the story of *Bubuksa* and *Gagak-Aking* on the *pendapa* terrace at Candi Panataran. It was not until 1939, however, following the publication of Priyono's thesis, that Galestin identified the *Sri Tañjung* reliefs at Surawana. Difficulties in identifying the narratives was but one factor influencing the judgement of both Krom and van Stein Callenfels in their opinion that the sculptors had placed the scenes in a wrong order. The more important factor was without doubt the quite remarkable ordering of the narrative sequence of the bas-reliefs.[4]

A fourteenth century visitor to the temple must have been struck, as were Krom and van Stein Callenfels, by the intriguing sequence in which these narrative bas-reliefs were arranged. Setting out on a ritual perambulation of the temple base in either direction (*pradakṣiṇā* or *prasavyam*) our visitor would have expected to read the narratives depicted in the reliefs in an order familiar to him as he was able to do at many other temples. In this case, however, such expectations would have been disappointed and he himself would have had to establish the correct narrative sequence. His disposition to find that correct order would have been influenced both by his knowledge of contemporary versions of the stories and by certain formal features of the bas-reliefs at Surawana. Contemporary versions of all three stories have survived to us in the manuscript record and on bas-reliefs on other eastern Javanese temples. The formal distinction between the large rectangular panels on the main body of the temple base, which are devoted entirely to representations of the *Arjunawiwāha* narrative, and the upright panels, on which we find the scenes from the *Sri Tañjung* and the story of *Bubuksa* and *Gagak-Aking*, would have been some guide to him in his ritual project. The visual dominance of the *Arjunawiwāha*, which occupies all three large rectangular panels on the walls of the temple base and smaller rectangular panels and upright panels on the walls of the western side of the porch and staircase, would have provided him with a leitmotif for finding his way through the narrative disorder which the bas-reliefs display. The *Sri Tañjung* and the story of *Bubuksa* and *Gagak-Aking* are subsidiary and provide, as we shall see, reflections and commentary of thematic interest to the bas-reliefs of the *Arjunawiwāha*.

Our knowledge of contemporary versions of this latter narrative is confined to a *kakawin* and the representations of the story found at a number of other sites in eastern Java.[5] Following the narrative order as it is found in these versions, the fourteenth century visitor would have discovered the initial narrative sequence on the large rectangular panel on the eastern wall. Here in a sequence of three scenes beginning in the south and ending in the north, we find portrayed "The Temptation of Arjuna":[6]

- Scene 15 Indra, who wishes to test the strength of Arjuna's meditation, sends celestial nymphs, among them *Tilottamā* and *Suprabhā*, to visit Arjuna in his place of meditation on Mount *Indrakila* in order to seduce him. [Photo 15]
- Scene 14 The nymphs bath and adorn themselves after descending to Mount *Indrakila*. [Photo 14]

- Scene 13 The nymphs attempt to seduce Arjuna. While his two servants, also in ascetic garb, succumb to temptation, Arjuna continues to meditate steadfastly undistracted by the nymphs. [Photo 13]

The following narrative sequence begins on the first rectangular panel on the northern wall of the porch and staircase. It proceeds to the east, the following scene being found on a rectangular panel which is folded into the corner where the wall of the porch meets the main body of the temple base. The narrative sequence is completed in a series of three scenes on the large rectangular panel on the northern wall of the main body of the base of the temple. This sequence of five scenes represents "The Confrontation with Mūka and the Dispute between Arjuna and Śiwa Disguised as a Kirāṭa":

- Scene 2 Mūka is seen in the forest on Mount Indrakila. He has been sent by the demonic king Niwātakawaca to attack and kill Arjuna. [Photo 3b]
- Scene 5 On hearing the approach of Mūka, now in the form of a wild boar, Arjuna ceases his meditation and comes to meet him. His two servants stand behind him, one carrying his bow. [Photo 5b-6a]
- Scene 8 Arjuna, and Śiwa disguised as a Kirāṭa, dispute their claim to the boar which lies dead on the ground between them with a single arrow in its side. [Photo 8]
- Scene 9 Arjuna and the Kirāṭa come to blows. Arjuna catches hold of the Kirāṭa's feet intending to throw him to the ground. [Photo 9]
- Scene 10 Śiwa abandons his disguise and reveals his true identity to Arjuna who is now seen kneeling in obeisance before Śiwa who will bestow upon him the paśupati arrow. [Photo 10]

The sequence of five scenes which we have just viewed is interpolated by five scenes from the *Sri Tañjung*, found on upright panels on the northern wall of the western porch and staircase and on the north-western corner of the main body of the temple base. On the north-eastern corner on two upright panels, between the two sequences of the *Arjunawiwāha* described above are two scenes from the story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking. These two scenes maintain the narrative direction of the *Arjunawiwāha* panels on the northern wall:

- Scene 11 The two brothers, Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking, the one Buddhist and the other Śaiwite, are seated next to each other engaged in conversation. [Photo 11]
- Scene 12 The tiger comes to take Gagak-Aking to heaven. [Photo 12]

The version of the story we have here is not the one known in the manuscript record or on the pendapa terrace at Candi Panataran, in which the tiger comes to take the Buddhist Bubuksa to heaven. In this more usual version of the narrative, Gagak-Aking is also taken to heaven by just managing to grasp hold of the tiger's tail as he sets off with Bubuksa on his back. The reason for this reversal in the story here at Candi Surawana appears to derive from the distinctly Śaiwite

character of the narrative bas-reliefs at least on this part of the temple.[7]

The **Arjunawiwāha** narrative is taken up once more on the southern wall on a large rectangular panel, in a sequence of three scenes, beginning in the east and proceeding in a westerly direction. This sequence is continued in a further four scenes on six rectangular and upright panels on the southern wall of the eastern porch and staircase. This sequence depicts "Arjuna's Triumph over Niwātakawaca":

- Scene 18 Indra sends Arjuna and Suprabhā to Niwātakawaca's palace to discover which part of the body of the demon king is vulnerable so that he might be deprived of his supernatural power. [Photo 18]
- Scene 19 Arjuna and Suprabhā stand outside Niwātakawaca's palace, where they meet other celestial nymphs whom Niwātakawaca has carried off from Indra's palace. [Photo 19]
- Scene 20 Suprabhā, once inside the palace, is able to elicit from Niwātakawaca which part of his body is vulnerable. [Photo 20]
- Scene 23 Once this information is revealed, Arjuna, knocking over the gateway, carries Suprabhā away from Niwātakawaca's grasp before she can be ravaged. [Photo 22b-23a]
- Scene 24 Arjuna and Indra's army march to attack Niwātakawaca's realm. [Photo 23b]
- Scenes Arjuna fires an arrow which pierces Niwātakawaca's tongue. His power is lost and he dies; his army is routed. The representation of the rout of Niwātakawaca's army appears to extend to the depiction of two horsemen who flank the staircase. Naked demonic figures are trampled under the feet of the horses. [Photos 24, 25 and 26]

This final narrative sequence from the **Arjunawiwāha** is interrupted by scenes from the **Sri Tañjung** which are found both on the southwestern and the southeastern corners of the temple base on upright panels. In all there are nine panels of the **Sri Tañjung** narrative, all are found on upright panels, on the main body of the temple base and on the northern wall of the porch and staircase. The first two in the sequence are found on the southwestern corner of the temple base proper. The sequence then proceeds in the ritual direction **prasavyam** so that the following two panels are found on the southeastern corner. We proceed then to the northwestern corner of the temple base where we find two further panels. The sequence is completed in three upright panels on the northern wall of the porch and staircase:

- Scene 22 Sidapaksa comes in the night to Sri Tañjung. [Photo 22a]
- Scene 21 He carries her off from the hermitage of their grandfather, Tambrapetra. [Photo 21]
- Scene 17 Sidapaksa and Sri Tañjung are separated. Sidapaksa has been commanded by his king, Sulakrama of Sinduraja, to go on his behalf to Indra's heaven, where unbeknown to himself he is to be killed, allowing king Sulakrama to seduce Sri Tañjung. As Sidapaksa and Sri Tañjung part, she hands him

**anantakusuma**, which will enable him to travel to Indra's heaven in only one day. [Photo 17]

- Scene 16 After being killed by Sidapaksa, who believes she has had an adulterous relationship with Sulakrama, Sri Tañjung stands before Dorakala the doorkeeper to the world of the dead, attempting to persuade him of her right to enter. [Photo 16]
- Scene 7 Sidapaksa is seated by the bank of a river where he has stopped to wash his feet only to learn of Sri Tañjung's innocence through the discovery of a small spatter of her fragrantly smelling blood on his kain. [Photo 7]
- Scene 6 Sri Tañjung gains access to the world of the dead only to be told by Dorakala that her time has not yet come and that she must return to the world of the living. She crosses back over the river Pamegat-Sari on a huge fish. [Photo 6b]
- Scene 4 Sidapaksa wanders hopelessly around in the forest and finally returns home to the **kapatihan** where he is greeted by female servants, also grieving at the absence of their mistress. [Photo 5a]
- Scene 3 Sidapaksa is seated in the **kapatihan**, grieving over the death of Sri Tañjung. [Photo 4]
- Scene 1 Following her exorcism Sri Tañjung is carried back to her grandfather's hermitage by Kalika, the servant of Ra Nini. [Photo 3a]

Clearly there is no straightforward narrative sequence represented in these bas-reliefs. If we follow the **Arjunawiwāha** sequence, we begin by following the ritual path **prasavyam** along the eastern wall from south to north. We must then begin again at the western end of the northern wall of the porch and staircase and move in the opposite ritual direction **pradakṣiṇā** until the northeastern corner is reached. Maintaining the same direction we pass by the eastern wall again, this time against the flow of the narrative there to pick up the thread of the story again at the southern wall. From here we move to the western end of the porch and staircase to complete the viewing of this narrative.

To follow the narrative sequence of the **Sri Tañjung** we must now move along the ritual pathway, **prasavyam** from the southwestern corner of the base of the temple proper till we reach the end of the story at the western end of the northern wall of the porch and staircase, passing by long sequences of narrative from the **Arjunawiwāha** as we do so. Finally on the northeastern corner are the two panels of the story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking which are to be read in the direction **pradakṣiṇā**. [8]

### Interpretation of the narrative bas-reliefs

Below the level of this very apparent narrative disorder in the arrangement of the bas-reliefs, and concealed by it, is another pattern of meanings which have formed the basis for the arrangement of the reliefs in the mind of the temple's designer. The second level of

meaning is made up of two intersecting sets of concepts which describe the human condition.

In the first place, a dichotomy is apparent between the bas-reliefs on the northern and southern faces of the temple base; the point of separation between these two segments in the narrative sequence on the eastern wall lies between the first scene in Indra's palace and the second scene in which the celestial nymphs bathe and adorn themselves in the forested mountain landscape of Mount Indrakila. The dichotomy rests upon a clear, iconographically drawn distinction between the settings in which the narrative action takes place on the northern and southern panels. All the panels on the northern side of the temple including the northernmost two scenes on the eastern face depict a natural landscape of forest and mountain. Those on the southern wall, together with the southernmost scene on the eastern wall, depict scenes set in palaces or in the close environs of palaces. This iconographical and narrative division represents a categorical distinction between the natural and the social. On the one hand the natural consists of a natural landscape beyond human society where the union of man and woman is absent and where the activity represented is concerned with the moral condition of the individual human being. On the other, the social is constituted of images of royal palaces, the union of man and woman and the activity represented concerns the moral condition of a social existence. These two categories are conceptually quite discrete.

The second of the two conceptual sets also describes the human condition but in terms of three quite discrete moral states. In the narrative bas-reliefs in the northeastern corner of the temple base we find images of the world renouncer: an ascetic figure separated from human society who seeks his own *mokṣa* and eternal relief from the *samsāra* and the social condition. The southeastern corner is dominated by the image of the world maintainer: a kingly figure, dwelling in a royal palace with his loyal subjects, who seeks to maintain social harmony and a virtuous moral order. Finally in the west are images of the world destroyer: a demonic figure, a depiction of impassioned self-indulgence, antithetical to and actively destructive of both human society and the moral constitution of the individual human being.

The narrative passages depicted on the bas-reliefs describe the interrelationships which prevail between the concepts and which constitute these two categorical sets. The *Arjunawiwāha*, which is so much the narrative focus of the bas-reliefs, and the *Sri Tanjung* and the story of *Bubuksa* and *Gagak-Aking* also, because of the opportunity which their citation provides for reflection upon the *Arjunawiwāha*, define processes which combine the categories of both sets - natural and social, world renouncer, world maintainer and world destroyer - into one moral vision.

Both world maintainer and world renouncer are met with for the first time in the three scenes on the large rectangular panel on the eastern face of the temple base. They illustrate the narrative sequence "The Temptation of Arjuna". At the southern end of this panel Indra is depicted as a king, dwelling with courtiers in his palace at the very centre of the social order over which he rules. He is portrayed in the presence of women, who dignify his male presence as they kneel before him in obeisance, their natural sensuality contained. Characteristic-



ally Indra initiates action which is intended to defend the social order over which he rules. At the northern end of this same panel we see an image of the world renouncer. The ascetic Arjuna is portrayed in the midst of a natural landscape of forest and mountain, remote from human society concentrating upon his meditative exercises. He is oblivious to the celestial nymphs about him. His two companions however succumb to the temptation.[9] Whatever irony and humour may have been intended by this vignette of moral collapse, it serves to underline a tension in this scene within Arjuna who struggles to retain control of his senses against the assaults of the nymphs. The nymphs at the level of narrative represent an external social threat to the meditating Arjuna; they represent a potential social relationship. However, they may also be taken to represent one aspect of the inner conflict which besets the meditating Arjuna: the threat from his sensual, biological self which might interrupt his ascetic concentration at any moment.

The relationship between world maintainer and world renouncer is conceptually mediated by women. Between the depiction of the two in this narrative sequence is an image of women adorning their natural beauty, an action which is at once social and natural. On the one hand they cover their natural selves with cultural artefacts whose aesthetic quality derives from the value ascribed to them by a particular human culture. On the other they thereby enhance their natural beauty that they might indulge in sensual pleasure and gratify their natural instincts. These two aspects of character ascribed to women in these bas-reliefs at Surawana, the one social and the other natural, are brought into sharper focus if we compare the two different images of women found in association with the world maintainer and world renouncer. In the first case their sexuality is totally restrained in the presence of male authority. In the second, their assaults on the ascetic Arjuna reveal a sexuality, an unashamed abandon, entirely in keeping with the natural world in which they are portrayed. It is not therefore without significance that in this first narrative sequence, where world maintainer and world renouncer are brought into such clear relief, we find portrayed with such poignancy the sexual, biological aspect of the relationship between man and woman. It is this aspect of the relationship of course which binds man to a social existence as householder. It is in this relationship that Indra's action might embroil Arjuna and it is this relationship which Arjuna's meditation seeks to avoid. But not, as we shall see, in the interest of his *mokṣa*.

The relationship between world renouncer and world destroyer is the thematic concern of the second narrative sequence of the *Arjunawiwāha* on the bas-reliefs on the northern wall of the temple base and porch. It is a sequence which in its illumination of the conceptual relationship between world renouncer and world destroyer apprehends the legitimacy of the transformation of the world renouncer into world retainer: the ascetic Arjuna meditates not to secure his own *mokṣa* but to attain the means to return once more to the society of his fellow men with greater strength to fulfil his social role.

At the western end of this sequence, Mūka stands in a natural landscape. The demonic world destroyer, represented here by Mūka, and, at the western end of the large rectangular panel of the southern wall of the temple base, by Niwātakawaca, depicts a truly natural brutishness. Physically monstrous, displaying animal-like character-

istics - fangs and hirsuteness, large belly, bulging round eyes - they are emotionally uncontrolled biological beings given up to the rapacious gratification of their natural instincts. In ancient Javanese narrative they are typically unable to curb their sexual appetite and destructive rage. Such an image of natural brutishness is no less in place in a natural landscape, than is the world renouncer who strives to deny his individual biological self in the interests of maintaining his separateness from a social existence. So then we find Mūka rampaging through a natural landscape seeking out Arjuna to kill him. In his transformation into a wild boar, he manifests his truly animal self.

At the other end of this narrative sequence is portrayed the world renouncer Arjuna, kneeling before the great god Śiwa. His ascetic meditation has accomplished its intended goal for he is about to receive the *paśupati* arrow. It is only in the course of this narrative sequence that the true nature of this world renouncer's meditation is revealed. The character of his confrontations with Mūka and the *kirāṭa* Śiwa has shown that he meditates not for his personal *mokṣa* but to return once more to society to continue in service to the world maintainer. We find then in this narrative sequence the world renouncer transformed into world maintainer.

Throughout the narrative sequence Arjuna is garbed as world renouncer. However, on Mūka's approach, he ceases to meditate and takes up once more the weapons which are emblematic of his warrior station, his bow and arrows. He resolves the threat to him posed by Mūka, not by maintaining a meditative detachment to his surroundings but by taking up arms to engage in physical combat. This same stance is maintained in his confrontation with Śiwa, who came disguised as a *kirāṭa*. Significantly it is at the moment of Arjuna's physical triumph over Śiwa that Śiwa reveals his true nature. At this moment Arjuna kneels before Śiwa to have bestowed upon him the *paśupati* arrow.

It would perhaps be well to take up at this point in the discussion the two scenes from the story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking, which are found on the northeastern corner between the two sequences of narrative bas-reliefs of the *Arjunawiwāha* which we have just discussed. On the one hand, they will confirm the presence of the world renouncer on this corner of the temple base, and on the other, highlight the true character of Arjuna's meditation.

The story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking tells of two brothers who seek their release from the eternal round of rebirth (*samsāra*). Bubuksa, a Buddhist, chooses the way of detached indulgence. Gagak-Aking, a Śaiwite, chooses the way of rigorous asceticism. Above I have noted an important difference between the depiction of this tale on the temple at Surawana and another version known from the manuscript record and depicted on bas-reliefs on the pendapa terrace at Candi Panataran. In this other version it is Bubuksa who is carried off to heaven on the tiger's back while Gagak-Aking, despite his great ascetic effort, manages only to be dragged into heaven by the end of the tiger's tail. The clearly Śaiwite character of the tale here at Surawana is readily explained by the Śaiwite character of the immediately adjacent bas-reliefs of the *Arjunawiwāha* narrative. Be that as it may, the appearance of two figures in the mould of world renouncer seeking their personal *mokṣa* confirms that the bas-reliefs were arranged so as to display images of the world renouncer here in the northeastern corner

and also serves to underline the difference between world renouncer and world maintainer, or at least, between the meditative purposes of the two. Arjuna is intent on a continued samsaric existence. Gagak-Aking leaves such an existence behind him forever.[10]

World maintainer and world destroyer are contrasted with one another in the final narrative passage of the *Arjunawiwāha* which is depicted on the southern wall of the temple base and porch. This passage portrays "Arjuna's Triumph over Niwātakawaca". At the eastern end of the large rectangular panel on the temple base proper, in the first of three scenes, is a representation of the world maintainer, which, in its essential detail, is the same as the image we have already seen in the first narrative passage on the eastern wall. The god king Indra is seated in his palace at the heart of his kingdom, commanding the respect of his loyal subjects. Once again he initiates action which is intended to defend the realm and maintain the social order over which he presides.

At the other end of this same panel in the third scene, we find the image of the world destroyer, Niwātakawaca. Here once more we have an image of self-indulgence: the demonic king in his palace, given up to the gratification of his physical being, seeking to indulge his sexual passion in union with the celestial nymph Suprabhā. So befuddled is he by this desire that he surrenders vital information which will ensure his own death and the destruction of the realm over which he rules.

The relationship between world maintainer and world destroyer is concerned with this possession of women. In this conflict, it is the social couple who mediates the relationship between the rival rulers. In this respect a comparison with the first narrative sequence of the *Arjunawiwāha* is instructive. In the first sequence it was "woman" alone who acted as agent of the world maintainer in his relationship with world renouncer. Here in the third sequence, however, the social couple, man and woman together, is employed to mediate the relationship between world maintainer and world destroyer. In the first scene Arjuna and Suprabhā kneel together in obeisance before the god king Indra as loyal subjects. In the second scene Arjuna is to be seen in the company not only of Suprabhā but also other celestial nymphs who participate in his action against Niwātakawaca. The separation of Arjuna and Suprabhā in the third scene is only momentary. Arjuna conceals himself near at hand, ready to re-establish the relationship between himself and Suprabhā. Arjuna's rescue of Suprabhā is of course depicted in the first scene on the northern wall of the porch and staircase. It is here too that we find depicted the inevitable outcome of the action initiated by the virtuous world maintainer: Niwātakawaca dies and his realm is destroyed.

Once again it is perhaps worth noting a contrast between the first and third sequences. Arjuna's triumph as world renouncer involved a rejection of women and in the third sequence too he displays something of the same detachment when he releases Suprabhā into the hands of Niwātakawaca. Niwātakawaca's failure on the other hand results from a persistent inability to restrain his passion to indulge in women. It is perhaps also worth noting in respect of this third narrative sequence, that it is only in the final scenes of this sequence that the separation of man and woman takes place, precisely in those scenes in which physical combat is depicted. The absence of women in the face of

armed conflict between warriors is paralleled in the scenes on the northern wall where Arjuna first confronts and kills Muka and then is engaged in combat by the *kirāta Śiwa*. We might conclude from this that physical conflict is included in the category natural in the system of meaning which underlies the arrangement of the bas-reliefs at Surawana. The absence of physical combat in the presence of women, that is in the context of social relationships, relegates the martial displays of warrior princes to take place properly beyond society.

The first scenes of the *Sri Tañjung* narrative are found on the southwestern corner of the temple base, between the scene in which *Niwātakawaca* and *Suprabhā* are alone together and the scene in which Arjuna rescues *Suprabhā*. In fact the narrative of the *Sri Tañjung* is begun a little earlier. In the scene in which *Niwātakawaca*'s death is portrayed, we see *Sidapaksa* participating in the battle on the side of *Indra* and *Arjuna*.<sup>[11]</sup> This reference to *Sidapaksa* in the last scene of the *Arjunawiwāha* is, I believe, a deliberate one for both *Sidapaksa* and *Sri Tañjung* are kinsmen of the *Pandawa*. *Sidapaksa* is the son of *Sakula* and *Sri Tañjung* the daughter of *Sadewa*. The reference to *Sidapaksa*, concealed in the context of the dying moments of the *Arjunawiwāha* narrative serves to remind the viewers of the kin-ties between the principal protagonists in the two narratives. We shall also see that, as in the case of the story of *Bubuksa* and *Gagak-Aking*, the *Sri Tañjung* shares important thematic connections with the *Arjunawiwāha* and provides commentary on thematic aspects of this latter narrative.

On the large rectangular panel on the southern wall of the temple base proper in the depiction of the *Arjunawiwāha*, a conceptual contrast was drawn between the eastern and western scenes. So too, in the case of the *Sri Tañjung* panels, a contrast is drawn between the southwestern and the southeastern panels. The contrast drawn is one which reflects upon the narrative sequence of the *Arjunawiwāha* on this same part of the temple and its thematic interest in the possession of women. The two panels on the southwestern corner portray *Sidapaksa*'s elopement with *Sri Tañjung*. At one and the same moment in the narrative bas-reliefs here on the temple, both *Sidapaksa* and *Arjuna* lay claim to the women who are theirs. Hereby that most fundamental social relationship - at least in the vision of the world depicted on these bas-reliefs - is highlighted.

The two scenes of the *Sri Tañjung* on the southeastern corner in contrast refer to the circumstances under which *Sidapaksa* and *Sri Tañjung* are separated and *Sri Tañjung* is killed by *Sidapaksa*. As was the case on the southwestern corner where a narrative coincidence provided the opportunity for a thematic interchange between the two narratives, so too at this point thematic references pass between the two stories. *Sidapaksa*, the loyal subject of king *Sulakrama* of *Sinduraja*, is sent on a supposedly legitimate mission on behalf of his ruler to the realm of *Indra*. In fact he carries with him a letter which will bring about his execution, leaving *Sulakrama* free to seduce *Sri Tañjung*. *Sri Tañjung*, in order to shorten an almost impossibly long journey and to shorten *Sidapaksa*'s period away from her, gives him *anantakusuma*. At this point in the narrative bas-reliefs *Sidapaksa* has literally only to step between one narrative panel and another to arrive in the palace of *Indra*. Indeed if we were not aware that there were two different stories at this point we might have supposed that the events depicted on the two upright panels on the

southeastern corner were taking place in the court of Indra. On both sides of these two panels from the **Sri Tañjung** we see a representation of Indra's palace.[12]

The scene on the eastern side of the southeastern corner in which **Sri Tañjung** stands before Dorakala directs attention to the calamitous consequences of the action of King Sulakrama. Thus in juxtaposition to the image of the virtuous world maintainer, the god king Indra, reference is made to the self-indulgence of another king, Sulakrama of Sinduraja. His passionate desire to possess **Sri Tañjung** leads him to betray the trust of a loyal subject, Sidapaksa. The same passionate self-indulgence which led to the demise of Niwatakawaca, an external enemy of Indra's realm, is found here at the centre of another realm, Sinduraja, resulting in the separation of man and wife and the destruction of the social fabric from within. The image of the virtuous world maintainer is thus subverted by this citation of the **Sri Tañjung**, reminding the fourteenth century visitor to the temple that the seeds of corruption and the disintegration of the realm may lie at the very heart of the realm itself and not always derive from without. In this respect, just as the causes of legitimate harmony and social order are sought in the image of the virtuous world retainer, so the cause of disharmony and social disintegration are ascribed to the befuddled mind of a self-indulgent ruler who is prey to his own base passions. The image of the world destroyer is evoked and situated at the heart of the image of the virtuous world maintainer.

The cross-reference between the two narratives at this point does not end here. In the **Sri Tañjung**, Indra discovers the treachery of King Sulakrama in time to prevent the death of Sidapaksa. Instead he is fêted as a kinsman of the Pandawa and he indulges himself in feasting and sexual pleasure. Our progress to the next bas-reliefs of the **Sri Tañjung** on the northwestern corner of the temple base proper takes us past the first narrative sequence "The Temptation of Arjuna", in which Arjuna, caste in the image of world renouncer, rejects Indra's offer of sensual pleasure. It is at this point that the image of Sidapaksa's indulgence is evoked, recalled by the detachment of Arjuna who as world renouncer rejected the companionship of women and who as world maintainer released Suprabhā into the presence of Niwatakawaca.[13] The evocation also recalls Arjuna's own similar indulgence in a narrative past when he returned triumphant to Indra's realm following his victory over Niwatakawaca.[14] The evocation of these thematic contrasts adds depth and poignancy to the three moral conditions of world maintainer, world renouncer and world destroyer which the bas-reliefs are concerned to explicate.

As was pointed out above, Galestin has indicated that an important deviation has occurred in the sequence of scenes from the **Sri Tañjung** narrative here at Surawana, at least on the basis of his comparison with the **kidung** text.[15] There is little to be gained in the present context by any detailed discussion of these deviations. Suffice it to say here that it is clear that the creation of a narrative disorder appears to have been a deliberate strategy in the design of the narrative bas-reliefs on this temple. In the case of the **Sri Tañjung**, it also seems clear that the scenes have been selected and positioned so as to evoke a thematic dialogue between it and the narrative of the **Arjunawiwāha**. With this in mind, let us proceed to a consideration of

the final five panels of the **Sri Tañjung** and their relationship with the **Arjunawiwāha**.

This final sequence of scenes, taken as a whole, appears to be concerned with the continuing separation of Sidapaksa and Sri Tañjung, thus upon the absence of the relationship between man and woman which in these bas-reliefs is taken to be characteristic of society. It is entirely appropriate then that this sequence should find its place in the context of a depiction of a natural landscape of forest and mountain such as that found on the northern wall of the temple base. Just as we saw on the southern wall, the drawing of thematic contrasts is again apparent in the relationship between the narrative passages of the two stories which are depicted here on the northern wall. If the **Arjunawiwāha** depicts the triumph of Arjuna's ascetic meditation, his control of his senses and his animal self, and celebrates the continued strengthening of his person so that he is able to return to participate once more in society, the **Sri Tañjung** depicts Sidapaksa's lonely grieving, desperate descent to animality and his incapacity to return to society. The first two panels of this sequence on the northwestern corner capture the separation of Sidapaksa and Sri Tañjung. He is seated alone on the banks of the river contemplating the innocence of the wife whom he has killed. She grieves as she comes back across the river to the world of the living.[16] The next two scenes again emphasize the separation of the two protagonists. In the first we find reference to Sidapaksa's lonely return to the **kapatihan** and in the second he is again depicted sitting, grieving at his separation from Sri Tañjung, a point again stressed by the portrayal in the last scene of Kalika transporting Sri Tañjung back from whence she came, to the hermitage of her grandfather, Tambrapetra.

This narrative sequence is juxtaposed to the portrayal of Mūka on Mount Indrakila and his transformation into a boar. In the **kakawin**, Mūka is described in the following terms at this point in the story as he searches for Arjuna's place of ascetic meditation:

He did not accomplish his task and became confused, perplexed and bewildered because of his rage ...[17]

In the **kidung Sri Tañjung**, Sidapaksa is described in similar terms as he grieves for his lost wife. He collapses on the ground rolling about, confused and mad with grief.[18] Again cross-referencing between the two stories has taken place. Mūka's wild anger is associated with his transformation into the boar. He thereby loses any semblance of humanity. He becomes an entirely natural being. Sidapaksa, while he does not lose his human form, does behave in an animal-like fashion. So given over to his grief is he that he casts himself on the ground where he rolls about like an animal. The scene in which he sits grieving in the garden of the **kapatihan** is set between the bas-reliefs which portray Mūka's transformation. From this vantage point he can contemplate a vision of his own descent to animality.

### Conclusions

At the end of **mpu Tantular's kakawin Arjunawijaya**, Rāwaṇa is caged and carried back to the court of Arjunasahasrabāhu. There Rāwaṇa's

grandfather, the sage Pulastya, intercedes on his behalf, requesting that he be released. Pulastya's plea on behalf of Rāwaṇa opens a discussion in the work on the subject of kingship, during which Arjunasahasrabāhu lectures Rāwaṇa on this subject before releasing him. Following Arjunasahasrabāhu's exhortation that he should become a virtuous king, Rāwaṇa's grand-father, Pulastya says:

... a king should not be negligent of his duty to protect the world and above all he should protect the hermits, dwelling in the wooded mountains [71,2]. The ascetic's steadfastness of mind should also be characteristic of a king ... The beauty of the realm is the retreat of the king, just as the mountain [is the retreat of the ascetic]. The wicked and evil are his temptation and bring confusion. They fill the whole world like celestial women in a hermitage [71,3]. However, the difficulties [in dealing with the wicked] are not the same as those faced in the case of the celestial women. The latter disappear and take flight if they are ignored by the ascetic. Evil-doers, however, prosper if they are ignored. The king should not be taken by surprise and deceived by them [71,4].[19]

These remarks of Pulastya capture the unified vision of the moral world depicted in the narrative bas-reliefs at Surawana. For these bas-reliefs, like a number of other courtly *kakawin* works including the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Pārthayajña* and *Arjunawiwāha*, the *Arjunawijaya* and *Sutasoma*, are concerned to explicate in a narrative mode the ideological world of the world retainer, the *dharma* of the *kṣatriya* king. What is important to note in this respect in Pulastya's comments is the rejection of *mokṣa* as the goal of meditation. King and ascetic share a steadfastness and detached attitude of mind. This does not entail for the king, however, that he be inactive in the world in removing evil.

Three images of the world retainer appear in the bas-reliefs: the ascetic, the householder and warrior. The narrative passages depicted in the three bas-reliefs establish the relationship between these three images. Their juxtaposition as aspects of a single moral vision, however, highlights tensions which derive from their association. The tensions issue from the attempt to reconcile two fundamentally opposed moral positions. The *kṣatriya* world retainer must at once live in the world and be detached from it. He must turn his back on meditation and suppression of his sensuous being and, thereby, the achievement of his own final release from the *samsāra*. However, he must carry something of this attitude of detachment and steadfastness of mind throughout his samsaric experience. Though bound to society as a householder through his relationship with women, he must be capable of breaking that particular social relationship. Transcending society in this fashion, he is then capable both of meditating alone and engaging his enemy in armed conflict. While the narrative of the *Arjunawiwāha* celebrates the triumph of Arjuna's detachment as *kṣatriya* in the service of the world retainer, in the *Sri Tañjung*, Sidapaksa's attachment to his wife and his status as householder and his failure as *kṣatriya* in the service of a virtueless world retainer is mourned. In the vision of these reliefs, it would seem, the image of the householder is relegated thematically to a subsidiary position.

Our narrative journey and contemplation of the bas-reliefs at Candi

Surawana, I would like to suggest, follows in the footsteps of the fourteenth century visitor to the temple to whom I have several times alluded. We have glimpsed from our remote vantage point of almost six centuries his interpretative wanderings about the temple and his conclusions. We have joined him in his discovery of meanings which are at once created and concealed by a beguiling yet confusing narrative disorder. With him we can now return to a double ritual perambulation of the temple, and with a new understanding, constructed on the remains of an old confusion, meditate steadfastly upon a pattern of meanings, once beyond our comprehension.



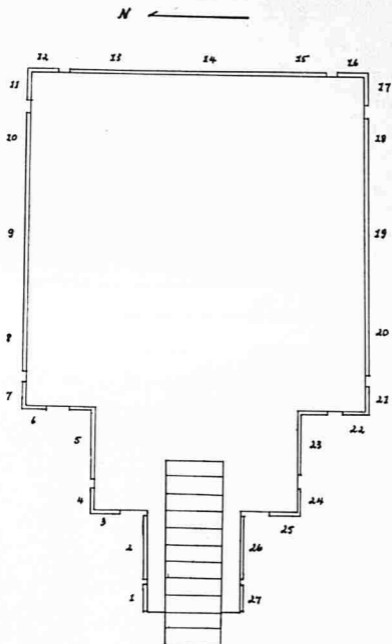
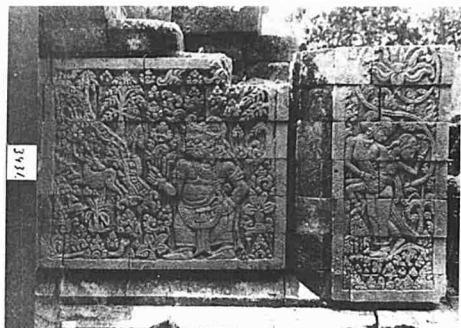


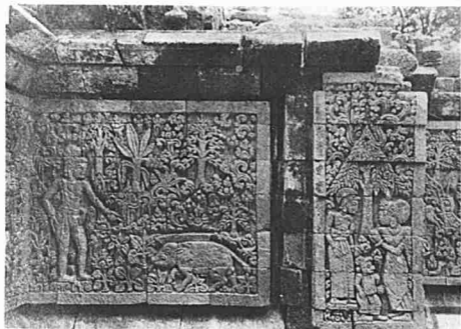
Figure 1: The narrative bas-reliefs at Candi Surawana.



(b) (a)  
 3. (a) Scene 1 (b) Scene 2



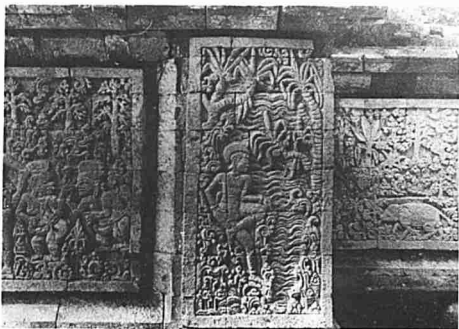
4. Scene 3



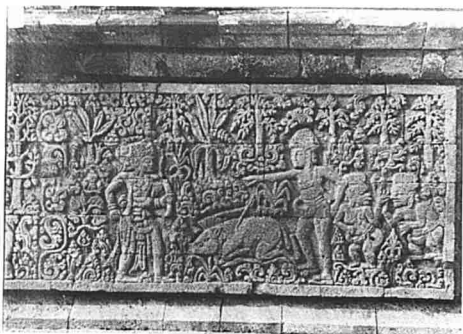
(b) (a)  
5. (a) Scene 4 (b) Scene 5



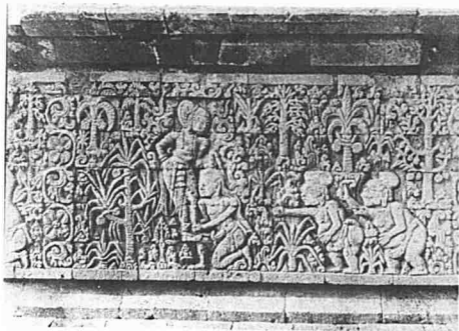
(b) (a)  
6. (a) Scene 5 (b) Scene 6



7. Scene 7



8. Scene 8



9. Scene 9



10. Scene 10



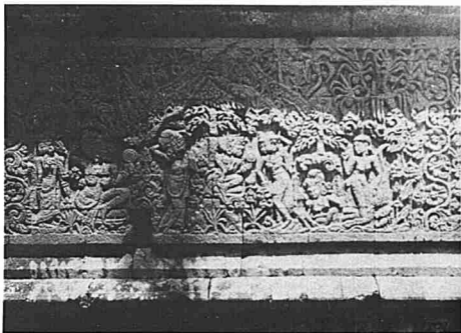
11. Scene 11



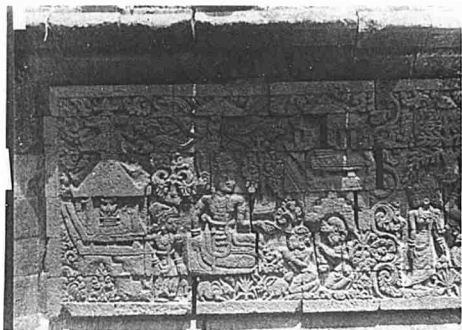
12. Scene 12



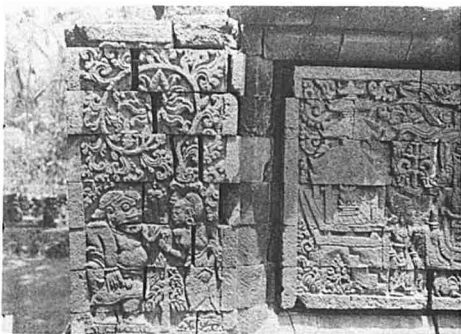
13. Scene 13



14. Scene 14

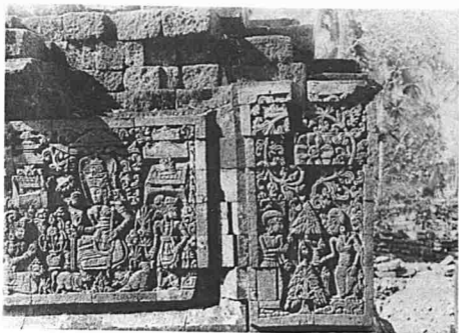


15. Scene 15

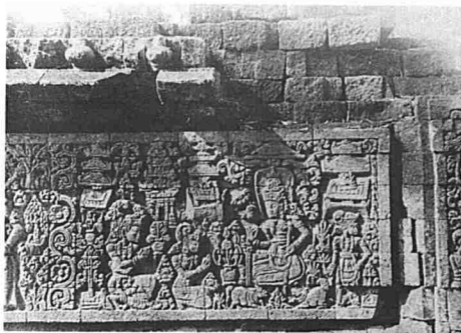


16. Scene 16

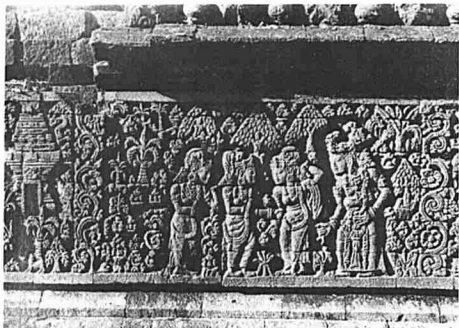




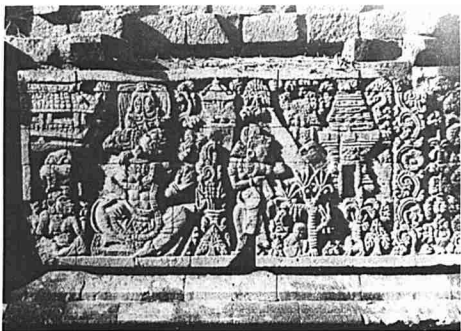
17. Scene 17



18. Scene 18



19. Scene 19



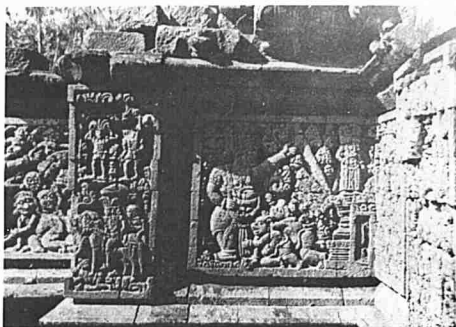
20. Scene 20



21. Scene 21



(b) (a)  
22. (a) Scene 22 (b) Scene 23



(b)  
23. (a) Scene 23      (b) Scene 24



24. Scene 25



(b) (a)  
25. (a) Scene 26 (b) Scene 27



26. The porch from the south showing Scenes 23-27.



Detail of Scene 26

## NOTES

1. For information on Candi Surawana, see Krom [1923 vol.2: 209-16], Bernet Kempers [1959:96], Pigeaud [1960-63: Canto 62,2 and 82,2] and Brandes [1920:30]. The proposition that temples in ancient Java were mausoleums (Stutterheim [1931] has been correctly challenged by Soekmono [1974]).
2. On the position of Wijayarājasa, see Noorduyn and Colless [1975]. Discussion of the Majapahit state will be found in Shrieke [1975] and Weatherbee [1968] who points out that a number of important territorial lords, including Wijayarājasa, each had their own patrimonial court and bore the title **prabhu** as consecrated kings.
3. See Galestin [1936].
4. Krom [1923 vol.2: 214], van Stein Callenfels [1925:37] and Galestin [1939:154-6]. The present author is currently preparing for publication Galestin's identifications of the **Sri Tañjung** narrative on bas-reliefs at a number of ancient Javanese sites.
5. For brief résumés of the **Arjunawiwāha** and **Sri Tañjung**, see Zoetmulder [1974:234-7, 435-6]. Complete editions of the **kakawin Arjunawiwāha** and the **kidung Sri Tañjung** have been published by Poerbatjaraka [1926] and Prijono [1938]. A summary of the story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking is to be found in Rassers [1926]. Other bas-reliefs depicting the narrative **Arjunawiwāha** are at Selamangleng, Guwa Pasir, Candi Jago, Candi Kedaton and Mount Penanggungan Site LXV. The **Sri Tañjung** is found on the pendapa terrace at Candi Panataran, on the gateway Bajangratu, Trawulan and at Candi Jabung. The story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking is also on the pendapa terrace at Candi Panataran. The bas-reliefs at Selamangleng are dated at the end of the tenth century. The others, with the exception of Site LXV on Mount Penanggungan, appear to date from the fourteenth century. Site LXV is fifteenth century.
6. For the placement of the scenes see Figure 1. Photographs 2-24 were provided by Dr H.I.R. Hinzler of the State University of Leiden from the collection of Indonesian archaeological photographs held by the Department of Indian Studies. They are numbers 3429, 3431-3452 of the Indonesian Archaeological Service. They are also to be found in van Stein Callenfels [1925]. Photographs 1, 25-27 are my own taken in 1982 with the kind permission and assistance of the Pusat Penelitian Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional, Jakarta.
7. Bernet Kempers [1959: plate 283] illustrates this more usual version of the story on the pendapa terrace at Candi Panataran. See also Suleiman [1978:9 and plates 17-23]. See below note 10.
8. Galestin, **Sri Tañjung** (unpublished), whose identification of the **Sri Tañjung** bas-reliefs at Candi Surawana is based upon a comparison with the **kidung** text, has drawn attention to the possibility of narrative disorder in the arrangement of the bas-reliefs. He notes that panel 6 should have been placed before panel 16, at least on the basis of the narrative order of the **kidung** text. His discussion of the identification of the woman pictured in panel 4 also gives grounds for suggesting that in this case too the panel has not been placed in the correct narrative sequence.

9. Galestin (1959), although he does not refer to these companions of Arjuna in the bas-reliefs at Candi Surawana, has argued that similar figures, depicted on the bas-reliefs at Candi Jago and other east Javanese temples are the precursors of the **panakawan** of the modern Balinese and Javanese **wayang** theatre.
10. The variant story of Bubuksa and Gagak-Aking found here at Surawana may well have resulted from the suppression of the end of the story with its clear suggestion of the superiority of the Buddhist path, and the selection of a scene - the one depicting the tiger and Gagak-Aking - with strong Śāiwite associations for depiction. Whether or not this second Śāiwite version had any general currency beyond the bas-reliefs at Candi Surawana is impossible to say at this time.
11. Scene 26, photographs 25 and 27.
12. Scene 15 and Scene 18.
13. See above pp.338-39, 340, 342-43, 345-46.
14. Zoetmulder [1974:237].
15. Galestin, **Sri Tañjung** (unpublished). See above note 8.
16. Note the position of Sri Tañjung's left hand raised to her forehead. In temple bas-reliefs in ancient Java this gesture signifies grief.
17. Poerbatjaraka [1926: Canto, 7, 1-5].
18. Prijono [1938: Canto 5, 107-114; Canto 6, 29-34].
19. The translation here does not deviate in any significant respect from that of Soepomo [1977: Canto 71, 2].



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## Possibilities for a Reading of the 1293–1357 Period in the Vietnamese Annals

O.W. Wolters

The essay presents a reading of part of a Vietnamese historical text, and the reading is based on a few procedures derived from what is commonly known as structuralist criticism.[1] I am not interested in this form of criticism for theory's sake but only for its application in the context of historical study. The test of such an enterprise should always be whether anything arises worthy of the historian's consideration.

A simple definition of a text's structure is its presentation and language usage which give it a recognisable shape, and my reading approach will be to pay attention to the text's properties in order to describe them. The reading will be along and not between the lines, and the focus will be limited: the conventions that announce a genre, ways in which materials are organised, narrational devices, underlying systems of linguistic signification, and the effects these features have in contributing meaning to what is being read. The object of study is to throw some light on how a text is rendered intelligible and capable of making sense to its reader as a specimen of writing.

An exhaustive reading, which mine cannot claim to be, could account for every feature. From a structuralist perspective, all features may be fitting together, and to the extent to which they do, and how, may tell the reader something. I wish to insist, however, that optional readings are possible within this framework of enquiry, and I would welcome them.

The text in question is part of the chronological narrative known today as the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, the Vietnamese annals which purport to span Vietnamese history from earliest times to 1675. The text is written in Chinese, and its first printing was in 1697–1698.[2] I shall concentrate on only a fraction of the narrative: the years from 1293, not along after the last Mongol invasion, to 1357, when the Trần dynasty (1226–1400) was on the eve of its decline and eventual fall. These sixty-four years comprise five reign-periods, and the rulers' posthumous names by which they are known can be conveniently introduced here. The period begins immediately after Trần Anh-tôn was appointed heir by his father, Trần Nhân-tôn. Nhân-tôn died in 1308, and in 1314 Anh-tôn appointed his son, Minh-tôn, as heir. Anh-tôn died in 1320, and Minh-tôn ruled until he died in 1357; his two heirs were his sons Hiến-tôn (1329–1341) and Dụ-tôn (1341–1357). Dụ-tôn succeeded

his father in 1358 and ruled until he died without an heir in 1369. When a Trần heir was formally appointed, he was hailed as 'emperor' and his father was now known as 'the senior emperor'. 'Senior emperors' retained supreme authority, though the government was in the name of and conducted by the 'emperors'. Minh-tôn, for example, was heir as well as emperor from 1314 to 1320, when his father, Anh-tôn, died.

I am interested in the version of the Trần annals available today, and I happen to believe that it is substantially the compilation of Phan Phu Tiên, who completed his commissioned narrative of Trần history in 1455. Some unidentifiable changes were made by an editor, Ngô Sĩ Liên, in 1477, but their extent does not concern me.[3] For me the important historiographical question is the nature of the sources which found their way into the narrative, and this I shall consider after I have attempted a reading of the present version of the narrative.

I have chosen my subject because I believe that structuralist modes of criticism are one of the historian's tools even when his text is copiously packed with documentary materials that justify independent study. Something else of historical interest may come to light in addition to such information, and the processes whereby an indispensable historical work is organised and its contents formulated can be studied in their own right.

### The text's structural features

I shall first observe some conventions which an educated Vietnamese in the fifteenth century would recognise and which would influence his expectations of what he was reading.

Structuralist criticism attaches importance to the expectations raised by a text's genre, and the Vietnamese narrative belongs to an immediately recognisable one; it is a chronologically dated historical narrative, and its model, written by Ssu-ma Kuang and his assistants in eleventh century China, is the **Tzū-chih Tung-chien**, which was inspired by the **Spring and Autumn Annals** and especially by the **Tso-chuan** of pre-Han times.[4] The Vietnamese version of the model, conscious of its genre, reproduces appropriate conventions. Each year, for example, is introduced by the ruler's reign-period. The ruler is invariably described as an 'emperor', the title by which he was also known in his Court. Precise terminology is used for certain events. Ssū-ma Kuang's term for a ruler's death (崩) is used. The 'killing of a ruler' (弑) is distinguished from the 'killing of a subject' (殺). A ruler on campaign may 'patrol in person' (親巡). The Chinese emperor, whose status is identical with the Vietnamese emperor's, 'invades' (侵) Vietnam, while the subjects of the vassal Cham ruler 'plunder' (掠) and 'pillage' (寇).

The contents of some of the other entries are often predictable. Celestial phenomena, strange happenings, and natural disasters are recorded. The Vietnamese compiler as well as Ssū-ma Kuang includes entries at the end of a year that begin: 'This year...'. The **Tso-chuan** does likewise: 'This year there was a famine in Chin'. Such entries in the Vietnamese narrative are sometimes followed by unfortunate happenings: a flood, famine, or outbreak of unrest in the countryside. Other predictable conventions include the meticulous and almost rhythmic recording of events in the imperial family such as births,

marriages, and deaths of princes and princesses and also the periodic promotion of senior Trần princes to Court posts according to the Trần system of autocratic government. - Obituary notices are provided for important princes and especially for the Hưng-đạo prince, who is accorded a very long one. Instances of princely misconduct are described. This kind of material together with edicts and missions to China account for considerable space.[5]

The text shares with its model other conventions besides patterned words and entries. Narrational devices are similar and have the functional purpose of creating effects. One device is what I regard as contrived narrating, when the compiler seems to be supplying his own sentence to emphasise what he has already narrated. After he has described the background to an imperial edict, he may add: 'This is why the edict was issued'. Emphatic devices relieve monotony and are important in a narrative based on chronology. One powerful and judiciously employed effect is to terminate a sentence with 'thus' (如此). In 1294 the ruler Nhân-tôn presented a poem to a prince: 'Thus was his extraordinary affection for the prince'. Emphasis can also be conveyed by sudden recourse to ornate prose, borrowed from Chinese classical literature. A list of thirteen officials is recorded under the date of 1323, and we are then told that 'their ability combined elegance and solidity in equal proportions'. The *Analects* provides the *locus classicus* and the expression is Confucius's definition of the 'perfect man' (君子). Or again, when the compiler wants to foreground someone, he may use the device of anticipation or retrospection. A person is mentioned before he appears on the scene or after he dies; the reader will not ignore him.

Direct discourse and the obituary notice are two more and important narrating devices, and I shall return to them later.

The effect of the naturalisation of Ssū-ma Kuang's conventions would be to alert the Vietnamese reader to the likelihood of a certain tendency in what he was reading. Ming K. Chan describes Ssū-ma Kuang's narrative as 'a history book of practical lessons', and the Vietnamese reader would expect the text to offer experiences in statecraft to rulers, guidelines for officials on their roles, and moral teachings for educated persons in general.[6] In one major respect, the reader would not be disappointed. Few practical lessons of history are more grave than reasons for a dynasty's decline, and Phan Phu Tiên, whom I regard as responsible for the shape of the present version of the Trần annals, was interested in this question. Three of his commentaries on the narrative reveal that he considered that the Trần dynasty's decline began in 1358 after Dụ-tôn succeeded his father Minh-tôn. For example, when in 1296 an official was executed for gambling, Tiên comments on the bad example set by gambling in Dụ-tôn's Court: 'In the end', he asserts, 'there was disaster'. [7] We can observe in passing that Tiên, in Ssū-ma Kuang's tradition, wrote no more than twelve commentaries, and only two appear in the 1293-1357 period, and this suggests that he was satisfied, as Ssū-ma Kuang was, that his materials spoke for themselves.[8]

The conventions so far noted would familiarise the reader with the narrative's genre and lead him to expect a didactic tendency. But the conventions by themselves, and especially in the absence of the compiler's running commentary, do not identify what is being taught. Ssū-ma Kuang, the master of the genre, provided a particular teaching

slant by means of the moralising vocabulary of the Confucian canon and especially in the context of Court discussions. This form of narrative, as we shall see, is not a feature in the 1293-1357 period. 'Filial piety' (孝) appears only three times and in the context of the imperial family, and 'benevolence' (仁) appears only in 1330 and is reserved for an empress dowager.[9] 'To observe' (覲) is another arresting term in a teaching text, for it requires the reader to note something the compiler deemed worthy of note. Yet the term does not dominate the narrative. Trần Khắc Chung's obituary notice of 1330 provides a rare example. Khắc Chung was a bad official, and 'to observe' is used to call the reader's attention to an instance of his discreditable behaviour. This and other unambiguously didactic terms are not prominently deployed.

Shared conventions would enable the reader to absorb the narrative in the sense of being able to read without being bewildered and therefore read quickly, but they would not invite him to reflect on what he was reading.

Another shared convention must now be noted, and it is connected with the way the narrative is organised. Nothing would be more likely to hold the reader's attention than this convention. The narrative conforms to a major structural feature of the Chinese model by presenting itself as a series of dated or datable entries, many of which are followed by one or more consecutive pauses. The pauses are introduced by 'at that time' (時), 'formerly' (初), and 'previously' (先是), and occasionally by 'afterwards' (後 etc.). Some pauses are long enough and in sufficient detail to constitute sub-narratives.

Here is an example of two pauses after an entry. An entry of 1303 states that Đoàn Như Hải was appointed to the high post of **tham tri chính sự**. The entry is then followed by a pause, introduced by 'formerly' (初), and we are told that Anh-tôn had sent Hải as an envoy to Champa and that Anh-tôn's father, Nhân-tôn, had spoken favourably about him. Another pause ('previously' 先是) follows and describes what Hải had done in Champa; he manoeuvred the Cham ruler into bowing before the Trần edict, and a precedent was now created in Vietnamese-Cham suzerain-vassal protocol. The second pause takes us back in time, and its importance is emphasised by its conclusion: 'Therefore this order' (Hải's appointment to the post of **tham tri chính sự**).

The organisation of the narrative into entries and pauses breaks monotony and engages the reader's attention. The reader will begin to observe that the entries and pauses contain certain recurrently used words, or their equivalences, and that these words are related to each other.

A distinction must now be borne in mind between a would-be structuralist critic of today and a Vietnamese reader of the fifteenth century. I shall consider the latter in a moment. The critic, by means of scrutiny, will come to realise that he is dealing with a set of five recurrent and related words, which I shall refer to as 'units'. What is significant about the five units is that they are capable of being systematically combined with each other in the sense that, in the narrative, a unit will consistently precede or be preceded by one or more of the other units. The full complement of the units resembles what I shall refer to as a 'sentence', syntactically ordered. The sentence is as follows, and I have placed the units in inverted commas:

'[The ruler] appointed' a person - who possessed suitable 'attributes' - and 'performed' his duties admirably - in a manner which earned him a good 'reputation' - and earned him the ruler's 'favour'.

I must make it clear that what I have described as a 'sentence' never appears as such in the text. The 'sentence' is recoverable in its extended form only when it is represented by two or more related units in the sequence I have just given. When two or more units appear in an entry or pause, they recall the absent units because their meaning depends on their capacity for combining with each other. The ruler's 'favour' depends on the official's 'performance'. An official with suitable 'attributes' will 'perform' his duties admirably, and so forth.

Entries and pauses with two or more equivalences of the units and always dealing with the relationship between rulers and officials account for much of the narrative in this period. I have identified numerous and often long instances of this form of narration, and they come to an end after 1335.[10] Appointments are sometimes recorded but not followed by other units. Not many 'sentence'-worthy officials are continuously mentioned, and I have to assume that they were the most prominently mentioned in surviving written or oral accounts. Personal relationships within the imperial family are sometimes narrated in pauses but less frequently.

The usual way to signify 'appointed' is 'to make a person an official' (以 --- 爲); the ruler is not mentioned but is implied, for only he can appoint an official, and this is why I have enclosed him in brackets. Sometimes, however, the particular circumstances of an appointment are given; in 1316 Nguyễn Bình is given a subordinate post under the prince Khánh Du. The good officials' 'attributes' are the equivalences of educated persons with such qualities as respectfulness, rectitude, sincerity, incorruptibility, and not being boastful or quarrelsome. The equivalence of 'performance' is signified by what an official actually did and is often narrated in detail. The officials distinguish themselves on campaigns; they go on missions to China; they hold posts in the provinces; they perform legal duties. 'Favour' can be signified in several ways such as 'treating well', 'congratulating', 'promoting', presenting an imperial poem, and giving an official an auspicious name.

Such, then, is how a would-be structuralist critic observes the text's conspicuous use of language. The reading is based on observing the span of combinable and recurring units. Would an educated Vietnamese of the fifteenth century pay similar attention to the same units? He would surely read carefully the passages where the units were represented because much of the exciting action was narrated there. I am also confident that he would be equally interested in all five units, but for a different reason. He would realise, on the authority of the genre, that he was reading about Vietnamese government, and he would therefore bring to his reading personal knowledge of the governmental system. He would know, from experience, that each unit was explicitly or implicitly associated with the ruler's prerogative of appointment and the consequences for officials. The units would signify for him, as I, too, came to realise, inter-related and essential aspects of the institution of government, and the units' combinability would be particularly obvious to the rulers. The rulers would understand that, in the

1293-1357 period, Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn appointed able men.

Before I say something more of the presence of the 'sentence' in the narrative, I shall note that the units begin to disclose themselves quite suddenly in the first years of my period. Before 1293 the unit for 'appointed' ( 拜 --- 授 ) occurs only irregularly and is not associated with other units. The first instance of a combination of units is in 1292, when Trần Thì Kiến was 'appointed'; in the pause we learn that he 'performed' well as a soothsayer in the Mongol wars and was 'congratulated'. The units are absent in earlier Tran times even though the narrative in 1267 states that educated men from that time were being appointed as *hành-khiển*, the liaison post between the ruler and the executive branch of the administration hitherto reserved for eunuchs, as had been the practice under the preceding Lý dynasty (1009-1225). By 1288, however, a scholar-official, Đinh Công Viên, received favoured treatment at the expense of an eunuch, and not long afterwards appointments came the way of those who had distinguished themselves in the Mongol wars and sometimes as proteges of the Trần princes.

Perhaps information about previous generations of officials was unavailable to the compiler, but the earlier Trần rulers' dependence on senior princes for assistance may be a better explanation of the absence of the 'sentence' before 1292, when Trần Thì Kiến is mentioned. The princes were the performers in the thirteenth century, and the narrative has much to say about them. My surmise is that the services of educated commoners were becoming recognised on account of their skilful conduct of diplomatic and other responsibilities during the uneasy peace between the first and second Mongol invasions (1258-1284). Nevertheless, their careers under the earlier Trần rulers are not presented within the framework of the 'sentence'.

The 'sentence' gets into its stride after 1293, when its presence is reflected in various samples of two or more combinable and ordered units in an entry or pause. Instances are numerous in the 1293-1335 period but peter out in the later years of Minh-tôn's reign. I shall give a few instances. Other ones are in Appendix 'B'.

I have found only three instances of entries not followed by pauses. In 1298 Trần Thì Kiến received an appointment, and the ruler favoured him by presenting him with a poem. 'Favour' is the fifth unit in the sentence's sequence, and in this entry it absorbs the second unit of 'attributes'; the poem extols the official's qualities. In 1304 Bùi Mộc Đạc was appointed to a post, and the entry states that he had ability, which is his 'attribute'. The ruler gave him an auspicious name, or 'favoured' him. In the same year Đoàn Nhữ Hài was appointed to a post. His 'attributes' are described as ability and education. A prince did not have these qualifications, but the ruler had no hesitation in promoting Hài, a commoner. I read 'promotion' as a mark of 'favour'.

In these instances the units of 'performance' and 'reputation' are not represented. But there are also three instances of entries followed by pauses (no. 12, 15, and 17 in Appendix 'B'), and the five units in consistent sequence can appear in one or other of these entries. Thus, the entry about Nguyễn Trung Ngạn in 1326 states that he was demoted, that his attribute was carelessness, that later he held other posts (his 'performance'), and that he had a certain reputation. The remaining unit of 'favour' appears in the entry of 1316 about Nguyễn



Bính, and the entry also contains the units of 'appointment' and 'performance'.

More often, however, entries, followed by pauses, are reserved for the unit of 'appointment', while the other units are profusely represented in the pauses. The pause may often deal at length with various matters, but the preceding entry, 'appointment', prevents the reader from losing sight of those units which are related to 'appointment'. An example is provided by the passage mentioned above about Đoàn Nhữ Hài in 1303. The entry records Hài's appointment (以 -- 爲). Two pauses follow. The first is introduced by 'formerly' (初), and we read that Anh-tôn had sent him to Champa and that the senior emperor, Nhân-tôn, remarked that he was 'a good person' and approved of the appointment. 'A good person' (善士) means here, I believe, one who is merciful and benevolent, as Hài has been in 1299 when he helped Anh-tôn restore himself in his father's good books after Nhân-tôn had threatened to disinherit him for drunkenness. Hài's 'attribute' is now established. The next pause, introduced by 'previously' (先是), describes Hài's earlier appointment in Champa, his performance there, and Anh-tôn's congratulations ('favour'). Thus, Hài's new 'appointment' is reserved for the entry, while the four units (the earlier 'appointment', 'attributes', 'performance', and 'favour') are reserved for one or other of the two pauses and in the sequence I proposed for the 'sentence'. The effect that the second pause is intended to have is indicated by how it ends: 'The ruler then resolved to make great use of him, and therefore this order' (the appointment recorded in the entry and associated with Anh-tôn's congratulations). The terminating statement may seem to be the equivalence of 'appointing' and repetitive, but I believe that the correct reading is as an amplification of 'favour'. When a ruler 'resolves' (决意) to do anything, what he does is no ordinary matter. Rulers 'resolved' to appoint their heirs, go to war, or go into Buddhist retreat. In Hài's case the ruler's resolve intensifies the effect of the 'favour' Hài earned by his 'performance' in Champa.

What happened in 1317 is another instance of the same distribution of units in a pause preceded by an entry. The entry states that Anh-tôn took Phí Trục with him when he visited the Trần ancestral village and appointed him to a vacant post. 'At that time' disturbances began to break out. Anh-tôn was angry when Trục did not immediately convict a suspect but realised later that Trục was handling his duties conscientiously. The official 'performed' well and was therefore 'congratulated'. The entry has noted Trục's appointment to the ruler's entourage; the pause contains the units of 'performance' and 'favour'.

In Appendix 'B' I have identified instances of entries followed by pauses. Sometimes subsidiary pauses follow a single entry, though in a few cases one must assume from the subject-matter that a pause is intended even though it is not introduced by such terms as 'at that time'. The pattern of unit-distribution is consistent. The entries normally record the appointment though, when this is not so, the 'appointment' unit may appear at the beginning of the pause. With the exception of this case, the pauses deal with the other four units.

The reading procedure has been to identify recurrent, combinable, and structured language, and this has revealed the underlying presence of a 'sentence', or a set of five associated and inter-related units. Relations constitute the first principle in structuralist perspective,

and the units are inter-related because, as a fifteenth century Vietnamese reader would undoubtedly recognise, they all belong to the language of government. I then ascertained where the units were situated in the entries and pauses. What happens, then, when one reads the narrative? I suggest that the effect is as follows.

When units appear in the entries without pauses, they appear sequentially. Their relations among themselves are those of association; they belong to and are selected from the language of good government. The ruler appoints educated men, who perform well and may have a reputation and be favoured by the ruler. A government like this is bound to be good. One can therefore read these units, when put together in an entry, as the equivalence of, or metaphor for, good government.

How should the pauses be read? The pauses, appearing more often than not after entries recording appointments, accommodate samples of the remaining four units. The units in the pauses are therefore elaborating on particular units other than 'appointment' which are also associated with good government and especially the unit of 'performance'. The pauses deal largely with what good officials actually did. But the pauses read in a special way. They are introduced by 'at that time', 'formerly', or 'previously' and interpose with the linearity of their entries. The effect is to slow down reading. Time is halted and even turned backwards, although pauses occasionally project the reader into the future by means of such words as 'afterwards'.

The pauses' function, I suggest, is to enable reading to become a reminder of and reflection on the excellent style of government in this period. When a pause is terminated by 'this is why the appointment [in the entry] was made', the narrative is at pains to make certain that the reader reflects on particular aspects of good government illustrated in the pause. And when one comes across a passage with pause upon pause after the same entry, the narrative is as close as its narrating devices permit to expatiating on aspects of good government 'at that time'. Nowhere is the narrative in this period more packed with unit-structured pauses than 1323, the year when the list of thirteen good officials 'at that time' is recorded.

How, then, should one read the 'sentence' by means of which I introduced the five related and syntactically ordered units straddling the narrative? The 'sentence' never appears as such but reflects two reading processes required by the narrative. The first process is metaphorical. The units, when they appear in the entries in linear sequence, read as a concise way of referring to good government and therefore read as a metaphor. The second reading process concerns the pauses, with units other than 'appointment'; they are preceded in the 'sentence' by hyphens and signify particular features of good government. Thus, when one reads the pauses, one is reading about parts of the whole, which, in the narrative, is 'government' and is signified by the preceding entries that record appointments; the pauses, providing the background to the appointments, testify to good aspects of the appointments and therefore to good government itself. The units in the pauses are replacing the whole (i.e. good government) and have the function of what is known as synecdoche (the part replaces the whole). And so the 'sentence' incorporates the two reading modes required by the narrative. The first - metaphoric - makes for rapid

reading; the second - that of synecdoche - makes for slow and reflective reading.[11]

This, I believe, is how one reads the narrative whenever the units appear in entries and pauses, and the 'sentence' corresponds with and gives effect to the two narrating modes which make sense of the narrative. But I do not want to burden myself with this definition of the 'sentence' when I refer to it below. Instead, I shall regard it simply as a readable statement about good government; it is 'readable' in the sense that the narrative is readable. I shall continue to refer to the 'sentence' as a statement about good government in this period.

The discussion may seem somewhat removed from the historian's concerns, and I shall return to it later when the critic meets the historian. In the meantime, one can note that the narrative's privileging the 'parts' of good government by means of numerous pauses has the effect of providing ample opportunities for the reader to reflect on what happens under a good style of government. This form of narration is what one would expect in a text with didactic tendencies.

I have paid attention to the units because they represent a major signifying system in the narrative, and the question arises whether other narrating features can be taken into account in explaining why these particular units have been selected from the language of good government. One now has to note a binary opposition between the numerous good and rare bad officials. The antithesis takes the form of putting units into abeyance or turning them upside down, and the effect is to contradict the norms of good government.

Not every official was a good one. *Trương Hiến Siêu*, though his name appears in the 1323 list of thirteen officials described as 'perfect men', was not entirely satisfactory, while *Trần Khắc Chung*, excluded from the list, was entirely unsatisfactory. Their appointments are recorded, but pauses do not explain why. *Siêu's* career was from 1308 to 1354, and *Khắc Chung's* from 1289 to 1330, but we learn little about their performance. *Siêu* was a protege of the *Hưng-đạo* prince, the hero of the Mongol wars, and *Khắc Chung* first became prominent during the Mongol war of 1285. An entry of 1307 records that he was sent to Champa to rescue a widowed Vietnamese princess from the funeral pyre. He fulfilled his mission and then seduced the widow. Many honours were conferred on him, but we know not why. The unsatisfactory officials' performance is almost ignored. Their characteristic attribute, however, is emphasised and distinguishes them from good officials. The good ones are almost always silent, while the bad ones have much to say. The narrative, instead of talking about the bad ones, permits them to do the talking and to their disadvantage.

One does not read about good Vietnamese officials as one does about good Chinese ones in *Ssu-ma Kuang's* work. In the *Tzū-chih t'ung-chien* direct discourse is an important means of bringing worthy 'Confucianist' officials to the foreground and of teaching lessons of history under cover of moralising protests at Court. The good Vietnamese officials, on the other hand, rarely disclose themselves in speech. In 1335 *Đỗ Thiên Hử* says that he would rather die on the battlefield than on his sick-bed in camp, and *Đoàn Nhữ Hải* speaks to the Cham ruler in 1303 only to communicate his ruler's 'resolve'. When *Hải* speaks uninvited in 1327, he is in trouble with the ruler. The good officials' silence reflects their peaceful and respectful attributes and also their ability to get on well with their peers. An

example of the association of silence with a good official is provided in a pause of 1335. When another general mocked Phạm Thường Cối, Cối did not quarrel, and his self-restraint earned him Minh-tôn's praise. What is recorded in 1328 suggests that the compiler deliberately avoided an opportunity of associating a good official with a voice. According to a nearly contemporary text, the **Nam ông mộng lục**, the censor Phạm Mai protested in 1328 when Minh-tôn's father-in-law, Quốc Chấn, was arrested on a trumped-up charge of treason.[12] Quốc Chấn had advised the ruler not to appoint his heir until the empress, his daughter, had a son. The narrative does not record the protest. All we are allowed to know is in a pause under the date of 1323 which describes Mai's attributes: 'He dared to speak and had the style of a protesting official of old times. Later he had a post in the government but not for many years'. We are not told what he said in 1328, when he was removed from office.

But Siêu's and Khắc Chung's attribute of speech is not concealed, and the result is that their reputations are damaged. A pause in 1326 states that Siêu accused Phạm Mai's brother, Phạm Ngô, and Lê Duy of taking bribes. Minh-tôn ordered an enquiry, and Siêu let it be known that he was a senior official and objected to being investigated. The result of the enquiry was that the ruler rebuked him for bringing the charge against his colleagues. A subsidiary pause in the narrative is now indicated by 'not long afterwards', and the subject is Phạm Ngô. The conventional sequence of units follows. Though Ngô's learning (an 'attribute') was inferior to Siêu's, his performance in office was 'pure and respectful' and he had a reputation at the time. Siêu's reputation, however, follows him to the grave. His obituary notice of 1354 criticises him for his management of affairs, for despising his peers, and for keeping unsuitable company.

Trần Khắc Chung's voice and reputation distinguish him much more sharply from good officials. In 1305 the Court officials advised against accepting the Cham ruler's proposal that he should marry a Vietnamese princess, but Khắc Chung supported the senior emperor and the proposal was adopted. In 1307, after he had seduced the Cham ruler's widow, a senior Trần prince denounced him and foretold that he would bring misfortune to the dynasty. In 1315 and in a pause, what he said was judged to be a 'fault' (失). Officials were discussing a natural disaster, for which he arrogantly disclaimed responsibility. In an entry of 1327 he made his colleagues laugh during a meeting's recess; the censor accused him and he was chided by Minh-tôn. In the pause of 1328, when Minh-tôn had arrested his father-in-law, the ruler consulted Khắc Chung, who uttered the dread words: 'It is easier to capture a tiger than to set it free'. His intervention sealed the prisoner's fate. Finally, in 1329 he protested when Minh-tôn decided to lead an expedition into the Black River region. Khắc Chung foolishly argued that it would be safer to attack the Chams. Minh-tôn rebuked him, and he gave a grovelling reply. In view of his garrulous behaviour, one is not surprised that his obituary notice in 1330 records that 'he was a person who talked against common practice in order to advertise himself and seek fame and reputation'. The notice also tells us that he kept lowly company. Siêu did the same, and the implication is that a good reputation in the narrative means satisfactory relations with one's peers. 'Favour' is the equivalence of having a good reputation in the ruler's eyes.

The narrating of Trương Hán Siêu and Trần Khắc Chung depends almost entirely on direct discourse, a structural feature denied to good officials, who are typically silent. The attributes, performance, and reputation of the two categories are so opposite that, when these units appear in the 'sentence', they can be taken to signify what are regarded in the narrative as conventional components of good government.

My reading has suggested that the 'sentence', always concealed in observable and patterned sequences of its combinable units, reads as a statement about good government during the 1293-1357 period. I do not know whether in Ssü-ma Kuang's narrative a similar reading of a dynasty's peak years, as these were in Trần history, would give the same prominence to the statement's set of relationships. Ming K. Chan's discussion of Ssü-ma Kuang deals with the compiler's motives and attitudes, the reliability and objectivity of his work, and its impact on Chinese historiography, [13] and for these purposes he isolates key 'Confucianist' vocabulary rather than describes structural effects of organisation and linguistic usage. I have identified a few examples of the same sequence of units in Ssü-ma Kuang's narrative, though I have not undertaken the scale of research the subject deserves. Nevertheless, I believe that the sequence is an inevitable and commonsensical function of a particular style of narrating, whether in Chinese or Vietnamese texts. The sequence merely describes attributes reflected in performance or performance that leads to different forms of acknowledgement, and this style of exposition is what one would expect in writing with didactic tendencies where the facts have to speak for themselves. Moreover, a near-contemporary Vietnamese text, the *Nam ông mộng lục*, which duplicates part of the narrative's materials, develops the same sequence of units in connection with Phạm Mại and also Nguyễn Trung Ngạn. The materials available to Lê Trùng, the author of this text, were circulating in Vietnam at the beginning of the fifteenth century at the latest and half a century before the narrative was compiled. Lê Trùng was taken prisoner to China in 1407 or thereabouts and wrote his work in China.

The obvious difference between Ssü-ma Kuang's narrative and the Vietnamese one lies not in the form of presentation but in what one reads. In the Vietnamese text local happenings require their own linguistic usage, albeit within the Chinese lexicon. The signifiers are Chinese loan words, localised long ago, but what the reading signifies is Vietnamese, and one way of recognising this obvious aspect of the linguistic usage is by noting to what the Chinese words are actually referring. Nguyễn Bình in 1316 is said to be 'pure and resolute' (清介), an honourable expression, no doubt, in Chinese classical literature, but what is being signified is unambiguously local; Bình did not buy anything when he returned from a mission to China. Presumably he had not made money. What is interesting about the narrative's entry-pause structure is not its originality but its reading effect and the frequency and particularity of its linguistic usage in the period in question. The structure is absent in the 1226-1291 period and disintegrates after 1335.

Can more be said of the 'sentence' or statement? One can begin by noting that the statement's function is not to call attention to the ruler alone, though he is signified by his appointments and favours. Instead, the statement is about the relationships between him and his

officials. The ruler is part of a set of relationships, and the set provides the statement about good government. The narrative would be imperfectly read, I believe, if one were to detach those units which deal with the officials and make them the focus of study. The narrative is not exclusively about them. Ruler and official belong to the 'sentence', and one should not pounce on one or the other to develop topically oriented studies.

The ruler appears in the 'sentence' in brackets [ ]. Can more be said of his signification in addition to his relationships with good officials?

### The narrating of Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn

The narrating of these rulers, father and son, depends to a large extent on two structural features: direct discourse and obituary notice. The rulers are anything but silent, and their direct discourse, often but not invariably in pauses, accounts for most instances of this mode of narration in the 1293-1357 period. Minh-tôn speaks more frequently than any other Trần ruler. Both rulers are accorded the longest imperial obituary notices in the Trần annals; Minh-tôn's is the more extensive and is almost entirely based on discourse.

These narrational features disclose a signifying system which is illustrated by the narrative's treatment of 'merit' or 'achievement' (功).

The term is often used in the text but usually associated with anonymous persons on rolls of merit drawn up after warfare. Poems written in the first half of the fourteenth century proclaim the poets' ambition to earn merit, but performance, reputation, or favour are not associated with merit as far as the officials reflected in the 'sentence' are concerned. The explanation must be that merit-seeking implies a personal motive and is unbecoming for those who are depicted as selfless. The silent general of 1335 is characterised as not using his merit to score over others. A good official was a good colleague and would not wish to prejudice his relations with his peers by flaunting his achievements. A dramatic episode in 1335 shows that overweening ambition could lead to tragedy. Đoàn Nhữ Hài is recorded as wanting to outshine his peers by earning extraordinary merit on campaign, and the result was that he died during a rash attack on the enemy. Minh-tôn was unsympathetic towards his veteran official and remarked: 'It was not that he did not know how to deal with his enemy, but his understanding was too ambitious. Thus we can "comprehend" (究) that a man's ambition may not go beyond its proper limit'.

The ruler was evaluating and condemning Hài's inordinate quest for merit, and this is the function of references to merit. Merit is mentioned to show that the rulers were shrewd and critical judges of others.[14] They possessed discernment and discrimination in handling situations and people, and the narrating of these two rulers signifies this faculty. The narrative has several equivalences for the faculty of discernment and discrimination: 'comprehending' (究), 'observing' (觀), 'seeing' (見), 'having discriminating understanding' (明), 'not showing bias' (偏廢), 'not being partial' (非私), 'being able to put oneself in a person's mind' (體履), and 'probing into' (揣知). The rulers resemble those who are distinguished in Chinese figurative

speech as 'sages' (聖) in the sense of being 'all-knowing' (通). Sages are gifted with penetrating insight. Not surprisingly, Nhân-tôn in 1290 and Minh-tôn in 1329 are hailed by their officials as 'sages' on account of their far-sightedness and breadth of vision.[15]

The rulers are therefore more distinctly characterised than their brackets in the 'sentence' imply, and their relationships with officials are among the occasions for recording their discernment and discrimination. In 1316 Minh-tôn, in a passage of direct discourse, explains that he knew that Nguyễn Bính would faithfully hand in the taxes he helped to collect. The same entry tells us that Anh-tôn acknowledged Bính's honesty as an envoy to China by promoting him two grades. Father and son concur in their judgment of this official. In 1326, after Anh-tôn's death, we are informed that on his death bed he had spoken well of Bùi Mộc Đặc and told his heir, Minh-tôn, that Mộc Đặc had served three rulers and that his attributes were worthy of being 'observed' (覲). The heir should treat him well and not allow him to be harmed by others. 'To observe' is an act of discernment, and Anh-tôn was taking the trouble to do so when he was dying.[16] We can note in passing that the reference to being 'harmed' reflects the possibility of virulent competition and perhaps spitefulness among peers.

Anh-tôn's discernment and discrimination are especially emphasised in his obituary notice of 1320, which is the first long imperial notice in the Trần annals. He was kind to his relatives.[17] He 'resolved' all Court business. He obeyed his father, Nhân-tôn, by giving up drinking and extravagant generosity to his entourage. 'Thus did he correct his faults without demur'. The rest of the notice is devoted to four instances of his faculty for discerning the circumstances of a situation or a person's attributes. He 'comprehended' (究) the facts of a legal dispute and lectured the official on the importance of investigating 'the wrongs and rights'. 'Thus did he understand (明) the need for care in penal cases'. He showed correct discrimination when, in direct discourse, he stipulated that his heir's mother, a secondary wife, should be denied a special privilege reserved for the senior empress. Another example of his discernment is when he refused to employ in high posts two officials with inferior ability. Finally, and again in direct discourse, he dissuaded his father from promoting a drunken official to the post of hành-khiển, and the notice ends: 'Thus did he pay attention to appointments'. The notice incorporates three instances of direct discourse and three instances of the emphatic 'thus'.

Here is a judgment on Anh-tôn's personal performance and an elegant tribute to his good influence in public affairs. He knew people for what they were, and no part of the notice is more convincing than his rejection of those with meagre ability. Appointments and favours of such a ruler were bound to be based on shrewd judgment.

Minh-tôn is similarly associated with a sage's insight. In a pause of 1320, which describes the progress of his father's coffin down river to the Trần family's ancestral home, he congratulates a 'loyal' official who refused to change Court protocol to provide Minh-tôn's mother, who was not Anh-tôn's senior wife, with a more impressive escort of ships. Someone had hoped to please the ruler, but the official insisted that 'the distinction between high and low must be made manifest' (所以明). Minh-tôn paid scrupulous attention to correct distinctions. But in a

pause in 1326 he was able to repudiate a false distinction when he scolded Trương Hán Siêu for suggesting that he should trust a *hành-khiên* rather than a judicial officer: 'I trust all my officials', retorted Minh-tôn. In 1329 he told Trần Khắc Chung that protecting the people against an invasion from the northwest was more important than winning easy victories over the Chams, as Trần Khắc Chung had suggested. Another instance of his good judgment is shown in 1335, when he decided to disregard his eye infection as a pretext for postponing a campaign. If he did so, he explained, the country would suppose that he was a coward and the North would invade. His judgment was shrewder than that of his officials, who urged him to postpone the campaign. When Court officials protest, they do so collectively and anonymously, and the ruler's rejection of their protest is conventionally followed by their deferential acknowledgement of his superior wisdom.

These are instances of Minh-tôn's ability to assess the needs of a situation. Moreover, his judgment about people was as shrewd as his father's. The three most unit-packed years (1323, 1326, and 1335) are all in the earlier years of his reign. In a pause of 1323 he 'put himself into the mind of (體得其情) the honest Mạc Đĩnh Chi, and in the same year he was pleased with the 'wise words' (知言) of a prince, who was grateful for the privilege of being given even a subordinate post by the 'sage'. In an entry of 1327, the ruler 'changed colour' when some one told him that he, Minh-tôn, was wiser than Anh-tôn. In a passage of direct discourse he rebuked this man by saying that one who made such a remark would not behave in a filial manner towards his own father, and the compiler, in a piece of contrived narrating, adds that 'this is why the ruler admonished him'. In 1329 a prince asked him why he fasted. The prince was a critic of Buddhism and Taoism. Minh-tôn 'probed into' (探其口) the sly intention behind the question and retorted that he was following his ancestors' practice.

A clear instance of Minh-tôn's breadth of vision is contained in an entry of 1329 when he was discussing Court personnel with his sons. A prince advised him to avoid mentioning what was 'bad', but Minh-tôn replied that he did not want to show 'bias' (偏廢). 'Good' should be compared with and distinguished from 'bad'. His sons would follow their own propensity when they listened, and he invoked passages from the *Shu-ching* and Sui dynastic history in support of his view.[18] The prince agreed. Minh-tôn's conversations tend to be with princes; good officials are usually silent in a ruler's presence and speak only when respectfully replying to him.

The narrative for the 1320's and 1330's represents Minh-tôn as his father's worthy successor. He led his soldiers and evaluated his officials' attributes. But in the 1340's and 1350's the enlightened ruler's voice is rarely heard.[19] His long silence is suddenly broken only in his obituary notice of 1357, which is constructed by means of no less than ten instances of direct discourse.

In this notice he declares his indifference to the prospect of dying and rejects Buddhist ritual and medical treatment. I am interested only in utterances reminiscent of him when he spoke in the 1320's and 1330's. We are told that, as long ago as 1312 when he was only twelve years of age and was representing his father in the capital when the latter was on campaign, someone objected to his performing ritual functions. The reason was that his half-brother had recently been born and was of superior rank. Minh-tôn replied that he intended



to withdraw when his brother was older and insisted that his conduct was 'righteous' (義). The episode could have been recorded under the date of 1312. Perhaps the compiler reserved it for the obituary notice to pack the notice with Minh-tôn's creditable utterances.[20]

We are then informed that he taught his sons that, if they were to be worthy of him, they had to prefer poverty to wealth; this was how the conduct of a person of rank was distinguished. He is as discriminating for his sons' benefit as he had been in 1329 when he lectured them on 'good' and 'bad'. Another echo of Minh-tôn in 1329 is heard from his death bed, when he advised his sons to 'observe' (觀) the conduct of men of old, follow what was good, and avoid what was bad. 'Why bother yourselves with your father's teaching?' This is not the only example we have of the association of 'observing' with a ruler. Anh-tôn on his own death bed used it. The term carries, in my opinion, didactic force and appears in Trần Khắc Chung's obituary notice of 1330.

Finally, the obituary notice supports the reading of the 'sentence' as signifying the ruler as an essential component of good government. He once said that his officials were not selected because he was 'partial' to them (非私); in 1329 he had condemned 'bias' when he was teaching his sons. His officials were chosen because they were a projection of himself. He is describing how he discerned their attributes, which were his own. If he were a 'worthy' (賢), they were bound to be likewise. His homily, which has nothing to do with his death-bed scene, is reminiscent of what he had said in 1326, when Trương Hán Siêu accused two colleagues of bribery and complained that the ruler should listen to his charge because he, Siêu, was a hành-khiên. Minh-tôn's response on that occasion was that he 'trusted' (信任) his officials, no matter whether they were hành-khiên or law officers. The reason for his response must be that he chose men who mirrored his own qualities.

Minh-tôn's obituary notice reads as a description of him in the 1320's and 1330's. His faculty of discernment and discrimination is reiterated and emphasised, although, curiously, the emphatic 'thus' is not used.

The reappearance of Minh-tôn's voice and with such volume has the effect of unexpectedly re-establishing him in the narrative after a virtual disappearance in the 1340's and 1350's. The effect is even more startling because of the melancholy entries during these decades which seem to throw doubt on the stability of government during the later years of his reign and contradict his reputation as a wise ruler. In 1343 and 1344 disturbances broke out in the countryside. Gangs of starving people, including monks, were taking up arms, and the narrative notes that the princes' dependants were prominent in the gangs. Unrest continued and became chronic after Minh-tôn died in 1357.[21] This grave development raises the question of the obituary notice's function.

A satisfactory reading of the later years of this reign as they are narrated remains problematical. I take the view that the obituary notice serves to protect the ruler's reputation, and some support may be given by Phan Phu Tiên, whom I regard as the writer responsible for the narrative's present shape.

Minh-tôn's death in 1357 is the occasion for Phan Phu Tiên's first commentary since 1296. Direct discourse is used as it is in the

obituary notice. Tiên writes that Minh-tôn had the endowment of a humane and generous ruler, who succeeded to a peaceful inheritance and did not change the system of laws established by his ancestors. Tiên notes that officials urged him to take action against those who were not registered in the villages and did not pay their taxes or render their services, and against subordinate staff who did not fulfil their missions. Minh-tôn replied: 'If this were not the case, how then would one maintain peaceful order? You want me to scold, but what would come of it?' Tiên's commentary continues with the statement that the Court officials, Lê Bá Quát and Phạm Sư Mạnh, wanted to change the system of laws. Minh-tôn replied: 'From the time when the State had its system of laws, the South and North have been different. If one were to listen to inexperienced scholars, seeking to obtain their objectives, disorder would break out'. Tiên ends by saying that what was really regrettable was that Minh-tôn listened to Trần Khắc Chung's insidious flattery, and this clouded the ruler's good judgment. Tiên is alluding to the execution of Minh-tôn's father-in-law in 1328. Minh-tôn continues to be sheltered by Khắc Chung.

I read Tiên's commentary as favourable and organised in terms of prudent resistance to change. The seriousness of the social unrest in the later years of the reign is de-emphasised, and what happened in 1328 becomes the single blemish on the ruler's sage-like reputation. Minh-tôn's poems indicate that he admired the meditative school of Buddhism (Thiền). One of his poems begins:

Overnight I attained 'mindlessness' even though I have not  
yet left the phenomenal world.  
I have played with wearing the tattered robe on my half-  
monkish body.

This aspect of his life is suppressed in the narrative and is not held against him in the obituary notice any more than it is held against his father, who, according to the narrative, went into Buddhist retreat.

What then, is Minh-tôn's function in the narrative? I suggest that his reign reinforces the notion of continuous good government during the sixty and more years when father and son were on the throne.

Continuity is supplied in several ways. Both rulers set examples in filial piety. Anh-tôn, honoured in 1295 by his father, Nhan-tôn, for being filial, was angry when an official in 1318 tried to alter Nhan-tôn's arrangements for his widow's burial. In 1327 Minh-tôn was angry when an official told him that he was wiser than his father and rebuked the official for his own lack of filial piety. Minh-tôn was displeased in 1332 when an official wanted to change the date chosen by Anh-tôn for his widow's burial. Again, both father and son had a pronounced sense of Court protocol.<sup>[22]</sup> Another similarity is seen in 1337, when Minh-tôn preferred not to appoint a favourite prince to an important post, and the narrative goes on to state that Anh-tôn had done likewise. Anh-tôn's choice was as long ago as 1304, and the coupling of the rulers' names in 1337 seems to be an example of the use of the device of contrived narrative to emphasise continuity. The list of thirteen officials, recorded in 1323 early in Minh-tôn's reign, reads as another example of contrived narrative to emphasise continuity in the two reigns, for some of the thirteen served both rulers. The list also enhances the prestige of Minh-tôn's reign by supplying this galaxy of

'perfect men' under the date of 1323. Phạm Sư Mạnh and Lê Bá Quát are included, though their first appointments are recorded a number of years later than 1323. The narrative states that ' [thirteen] officials succeeded each other at Court'. The compiler evidently realised that his materials required him to emphasise the quality of government and performance during these two reigns.

A further and important instance of continuity in the two reigns is the care, recorded in the narrative, both rulers took in appointing suitable heirs. The Trần rulers paid attention to this matter, but Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn faced special problems and had to be very cautious. The Trần dynasty had established the precedent that heirs were sons of senior wives, who were also members of the Trần family. Anh-tôn's and Minh-tôn's senior wives did not bear sons early enough. The narrative shows how Anh-tôn hesitated for a number of years before appointing Minh-tôn, the son of a junior wife. Minh-tôn in 1328 also had no son by his empress. The narrative, in the long pause of 1328, explains that the ruler was 'already old' (he was twenty-eight years of age but had been on the throne for fifteen years) and therefore chose Hiên-tôn, the son of a junior wife, as heir. Perhaps the reason for his choice is recorded to excuse him, just as the ingratiating Trần Khắc Chung's function in the narrative of 1328 seems to be to mitigate the ruler's responsibility for killing his father-in-law; the prince had advised Minh-tôn to postpone making a decision. In 1341 Hiên-tôn died, and Minh-tôn was again careful in appointing an heir. He rejected his empress's eldest son, born after 1328, because he was dissolute and appointed the youthful Dụ-tôn, a younger son of the empress, though he knew that Dụ-tôn might be impotent. We have seen the trouble Minh-tôn took to teach his sons.

In these ways, the narrating of the two reigns reads as a sequence of good government under wise rulers. The sequence ends with the obituary notice of 1357 and the reaffirmation of Minh-tôn's good reputation. The effect of continuity is consistent with Phan Phu Tiên's commentaries of 1237, 1296, and 1397, which date the beginning of the dynasty's decline in Dụ-tôn's reign. The narrating of Dụ-tôn's reign is based almost entirely on grievous entries and bears out Tiên's judgment.

One explanation of Minh-tôn's function in the narrative may therefore be that his reign was intended to read as a prolongation of good government until 1357. The three narrating devices responsible for the effect would be direct discourse, obituary notice, and numerous equivalences of discernment and discrimination. The reader is not required to pause and reflect on the weakened government in the dreary 1340's and 1350's. Another explanation could be that he is the spokesman for the attributes of good judgment which his father exemplified by appointing good officials. Minh-tôn would be enunciating the criteria of discretion that resulted in exemplary imperial decisions.

I have now attempted to read the narrative in the 1293-1357 period. I tried to account for ways in which the material was fitting together, though I am sure that I have not accounted for everything. I noted instances of narrating devices which evidently the compiler considered necessary to help the reader make sense of the text, and I proposed two signifying systems, which straddled the narrative and provided it with a structure based on presentation and linguistic usage. The first system was a set of five combinable and recurrent units

which, in their totality, were a 'sentence' or statement about good government. The second was a set of recurrent signifiers of the sage-like quality of the two rulers and explained why they exercised good judgment. No doubt other readings would discover additional signifying systems.

The rulers are essential in both systems. They are signified by the 'sentence' they initiate, and their personal attributes underscore the wise manner in which they do so. And so the 'sentence' can now be enlarged to read as follows:

[The ruler] - who had the attributes of discernment and discrimination - appointed a person - who possessed satisfactory attributes - and performed his duties admirably - in a manner which earned him a good reputation - and earned him the ruler's favour.

The hyphens indicate pauses and slow down reading to enable the reader to ponder particular aspects of good government.

I have concentrated on recurrent structural and linguistic features at the expense of movement through time. The fifteenth century Vietnamese reader, effortlessly absorbing and reflecting on this specimen of a recognisable genre, would not read with such detachment. He would realise that all was going well for Vietnam throughout most of the period. The Cham and Black River invaders were repulsed by rulers who themselves went on campaign. Mongol rule in China was faltering, but this did not mean that the rulers lowered their guard; Minh-tôn in 1335 still feared that the Mongols might attack and he did not want to be known as a coward. At home social unrest became serious only in the 1340's and 1350's. In 1317 a pause states that disturbances were beginning to break out, but the purpose of the pause is to call attention to Anh-tôn's ability in recognising the skilful conduct of the official who was dealing with the disturbances and eventually convicted the ringleader. In 1317, too, Minh-tôn, still heir, ordered a greedy princess to restore land stolen from the people, and as long ago as 1296 Anh-tôn had rebuked a prince for treating the people badly.

The 'sentence' provides a Vietnamese comment on this admirable period and especially, I believe, on Anh-tôn's reign. On behalf of Anh-tôn the compiler uses the device of anticipation and retrospection. Anh-tôn is mentioned as early as 1278, when he was only three years old. An official in 1278 helped to extinguish a fire, and the passage goes on to state that, many years later, Anh-tôn heard of the official's service and congratulated him on his intelligence. Anh-tôn's debut in the narrative is appropriate. And in 1337, after he had been dead for some years, we are reminded that he preferred to employ men with ability rather than princes without ability.[23]

The material from which the 'sentence' emerges is worthy of a genre of didactic history where the functions and properties of the text are sufficient to convey its teachings, and in two ways a Vietnamese emphasis may be coming through a text which conforms with the conventions of its Chinese prototype: the dependence of silent, obedient, and efficient officials on the rulers; the good judgment of sage-like rulers, in whose autocratic hands the well-being of the country was entrusted.

A historian of China may not be prepared to recognise the Vietnamese emphasis and contend that the Sung emperors in Ssü-ma Kuang's

day were also autocratic. Such is Ming K. Chan's view. According to him, Ssū-ma Kuang wanted to provide a theoretical justification for the prevailing despotism by insisting on the importance of the emperor's role in maintaining the hierarchical order by means of the relationship between the ruler and 'totally loyal and obedient officials'. [24] Distinctions of rank and political obedience are certainly emphasised in the Vietnamese narrative, and so is the passive role of government which is another part of Ssū-ma Kuang's paradigm. Minh-tôn is quoted in Phan Phu Tiên's commentary of 1357 as saying that chivying and scolding were of no use.

But I doubt whether the Vietnamese compiler had the eleventh century Sung rulers in mind as his model for Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn and wanted to criticise the incompleteness of the Vietnamese version of the model. According to Phan Phu Tiên's commentary of 1357, Minh-tôn insisted that there was a difference between the system of laws in the South and North, and Tiên seems to quote him with approval. What happened in the 1293-1357 period and especially in the 1340's and 1350's could not always have been so satisfactory that officials never felt the need to raise objections. Yet serious protests are not recorded. Protests are trivial, foolish, and ineffective. Phạm Mãi's protest of 1328 is suppressed. According to the narrative's lesson of history, good officials are habitually silent. Ming K. Chan emphasises the large amount of space given by Ssū-ma Kuang to 'moral discussions, speech, and memorials' during T'ang T'ai-tsung's reign in the seventh century, a reign which was surely a successful one in Chinese history. [25] But in the Vietnamese narrative only the rulers enunciate and supervise the purposes of good government. Speech as a narrating device is one-sided. And did the Sung emperors receive taxes in person as Minh-tôn would have done in 1316 if he had not trusted Nguyễn Bính? One should also bear in mind that the Vietnamese emperors not only went on campaign but personally superintended their executive officers to the extent of reading their minds and characters. Factionalism was absent in this period with the exception of Trần Khắc Chung's associates, who came from the same area and were responsible for the crisis of 1328.

Are these 'Chinese' features? If they are not, what else went on behind the scene that was not 'Chinese'?

The obvious circumstance that China was a large country and Vietnam was not explains much of the differences. The geographical setting for the Vietnamese autocracy was different from that of Sung China and therefore its style too. Yet scholars in both countries were familiar with the same Chinese texts on good government. But even in this respect the Vietnamese ruler was not quite the kind of sage-ruler recorded in the *Shu-ching*, at least. Sometimes the narrative reflects archaisms reminiscent of passages in the *Shu-ching*, from which Minh-tôn quotes when he is teaching his sons in 1329. [26] The Chinese text insists that 'offices may not be given to men because they are favoured (才) but only to men of ability', [27] and Minh-tôn's obituary notice records him as saying that he was not 'partial' (才) in selecting his officials. But Minh-tôn goes on to say that officials were a projection of himself, and he would never have agreed with the *Shu-ching's* view: 'As his legs and arms form the man, so does a good minister form the sage-king'. [28]

I have made much of the statement about good government. But

now I have to admit that the statement not only reads as palpably elitist but that it also comes close to resembling a version of ideal government. Was there ever so admirable a Vietnamese government? Perhaps the clinical procedures I have adopted make a mountain out of a molehill. Is there anything about the statement that could interest historians with other modes of historical analysis at their disposal? And so the critic must meet the historian.

### The critic and the historian

The narrative was compiled in the mid-fifteenth century. I do not know whether the reading would make sense to a Lê historian,[29] but a Trần historian need not leave empty-handed. The proposed reading of the text enables a continuity to be established throughout the fourteenth century in Vietnam.

What is disclosed is a persisting conviction that government under the style of Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn was a memorable experience, and a hint of this is provided by nostalgic memories of the earlier decades cherished among educated men during the disturbed later years of the century. For example, Phạm Sư Mạnh visited the Cam-lô temple about which Minh-tôn had written a poem, and he wept when he re-read the poem.[30] The famous teacher Chu Văn An, in retreat during Dụ-tôn's reign (1358-1369), wrote:

But just as the ancient cassia sways in the wind and  
 perfumes the stone path,  
 And the tender moss, soaked with water, hides the pine gate,  
 So my heart is still not yet dust,  
 For, when I hear talk of [my] former emperor [Minh-tôn], I  
 secretly wipe away my tears.[31]

Chu Văn An had tutored Minh-tôn's sons. One of Minh-tôn's sons, Nghệ-tôn, in whose name the Trần family recovered the throne from a usurper in 1370, wrote a poem and urged his supporters to remember Minh-tôn's heritage, and he also announced that he intended to follow the system of laws of the 1324-1328 reign-period early in his father's reign. Nguyễn Phi Khanh, writing in the last two decades of the century, recalled that:

The country in former times was an empire with scholarly  
 officials.  
 Today ordinary men serve in the Secretariat.[32]

The question is how these men remembered the past so affectionately. Nostalgia for peaceful times is not surprising when the Trần dynasty was collapsing in the second half of the century. What is interesting is that, when these men wrote poems to celebrate good officials or criticise government in their own day, they were describing the relationship between the ruler and his officials in precisely the way the narrative does when it presents the relationship as the hallmark of good government.[33] In particular, the poems contain equivalences of the narrative's language and they order the units in the same sequence in which they appear in the narrative. We are therefore reading late fourteenth century writing which subscribes to the signifying system of a mid-fifteenth century account of the earlier decades of the fourteenth century.

The poems, like the narrative, are written in Chinese, and they are organised according to the rules of New T'ang prosody. They have four couplets, and the couplets proceed from situation to scene, happening, and reflection just as Chinese poems in this genre may do. But semantic space, though sometimes incorporating elegant snatches of Chinese poetry, is occupied by Chinese words which are used to signify Vietnamese meanings. For example, silent magpies and migrating geese are conventional Chinese metaphors for calling attention to one's solitude, but Nguyễn Phi Khanh uses them in the Vietnamese context to signify the empty residence of a once honoured minister-of-state, Nguyễn Đán, and his own grief.

The first couplet in a celebratory poem introduces an official who is undertaking or about to undertake a mission on the ruler's behalf. He has been 'appointed' to do something, and the couplet corresponds to the first unit of 'appointment' in the 'sentence'. One first couplet, for example, mentions 'the dignified authority liberally bestowed', a poetic equivalence of 'appointment'. [34] Another first couplet refers to an official's 'pennant', another way of signifying an appointment. [35]

The first couplet can also celebrate an official's 'attributes', the second unit, and the similarity of language in poetry and narrative is now marked. A good official in the poems is an educated man, as he is in the narrative. 'Honesty' is another shared attribute. Nguyễn Phi Khanh sees himself as '[living] lonely in a single hut but [I] rejoice in my pure poverty'. [36] He had been deprived of office and felt free to criticise officials. An echo of his sentiments is found in the narrative of 1377, where the censor Trương Đổ is recorded as living in 'pure poverty'. Khanh is contrasting himself with bad officials such as those he mentions in another first couplet:

I disdain one who, promoted a grade, boasts to his country neighbours.

Who is to say that he has a purifying character when he does not relieve the poor? [37]

Here is a further instance of congruence in narrative and poetry and in a couplet where 'attributes' follow 'appointment'. 'Boasting' signifies noise, and bad officials in the narrative are distinguished by their abrasive voices. Trần Khắc Chung spoke to advertise himself and seek fame and reputation. In Khanh's poems noise becomes an equivalence of bad government:

A thousand miles of paddy are red as if they were all burnt.

The countryside is groaning and sighing. I am unhappy. [38]

Again,

The people are wailing. They wait to be fed and clothed.

Which of these families have precious things piled in mounds? [39]

The poets naturally make much of the attributes of those they celebrate, and the unit spills into the second couplets which describe the scene of the official's employment and evoke the associations of endurance. The scene may be signified as horrific, heroic, strange, or teeming with problems of government. Travelling in such a scene is itself a mark of the official's ability to endure. The narrative's signification of endurance may be to record of an official that he was

'pure and resolute' or had determination (志). Minh-tôn congratulated Đổ Thiên Hư's determination when the aging official insisted on going into battle when he was very sick.

The next unit in the 'sentence' is 'performance', and the poems maintain the same sequence. 'Performance' is reserved for the third couplets, which deal with happenings in the scene described in the second couplet. Attributes tend to be illustrated in every couplet of a celebratory poem, but the emphasis in the third couplets is on performance.

We now observe that, in the poems, a good official's performance is not described as being 'meritorious'. 'Merit' is excluded as it is from the 'sentence'. The good official performs his duties impersonally and does not seek merit or boast of promotion; the bad official 'boasts to his country neighbours'. Nguyễn Đán's poem in honour of Nguyễn Trung Ngạn associates him with 'merit', [40] but Ngạn's own poems often mention the merit he hopes to earn. Ngạn's reputation in the narrative is not particularly favourable, though his career was the longest and most rewarded one in the fourteenth century. Under the date of 1326, the narrative quotes Ngạn's poem which sets forth his youthful and distinguished *cursum honorum*, and then we are told: 'Thus did he boast'. [41] His was not the silence of a good official.

The third couplets, ignoring merit, signify performance by the activities with which the official is involved. We read of 'strategy', 'the army's muster and deployment', the importance or success of the mission, and overcoming the pangs of separation from one's friends. Nguyễn Đán writes of Lê Bá Quái, mentioned in the list of 1323:

You are forgetful of yourself in the vicissitudes of fortune.  
Your mind is impregnable.  
You assist the State in peace and danger. Your position is at  
the centre. [42]

Being 'at the centre' is a figure of speech for one who is always 'performing'. The narrative, and especially its pauses, provide instances of performance by envoys, provincial officials, and legal officers, but the poems are less specific. Khanh, in a third couplet, writes of an envoy to China who 'will clear away all problems on the route'. In another third couplet of a poem addressed to a friend assigned to a disturbed area, he writes:

Your plans will permit some display of your skill in affairs  
of State.  
Repulsing the enemy in the final reckoning depends on a  
'worthy' ( 賢 ) who saves the times. [43]

One of Nguyễn Đán's poems, in honour of Phạm Sư Mạnh, refers to him in the third couplet as 'a scholar of high integrity', and the third couplet reads:

The waxing of the sun and moon, man can easily see.  
But wisdom and stupidity, failure and success, these phenomena  
are difficult to control. [44]

Đán describes Mạnh as engulfed in an unpredictable situation, difficult to handle and requiring exceptional performance on his part.

Performance in the poems is a practical matter. In a third couplet of a poem addressed to the examination officials, Nguyễn Đán stresses



by means of Chinese classical allusions the officials' responsibility for the ruin or restoration of the dynasty. Every-thing depends on a wise choice of examination graduates, and the graduates he wants in his troubled times are indicated in the final couplet:

When the ruler repeatedly asks for a large number of graduates,  
You must put first loyal advice and only afterwards put literary flourishes.[45]

Learning alone is not sufficient, as Đán writes of himself in 1362 in a two-couplet poem:

For some years the summers have been dry and, moreover, the autumns have been very wet.  
The crops have withered and the sprouts have been damaged.  
The harm has been widespread and serious.  
Thirty thousand scrolls of writing are of no use.  
The white head vainly carries a mind that loves the people.[46]

The narrative shows the same preference for practical performance. Phạm Ngộ's learning was inferior to Trương Hán Siêu's but he performed his duties well and had a reputation in his day. The officials recorded under the date of 1323 had 'accomplishments and solid qualities equally combined', and, in the passage in the *Analects* which supplies this quotation, Confucius states that 'where the accomplishments are in excess of the solid qualities, we have the manners of a clerk'. The *Analects* furnishes a trope to make the point that these officials were useful as well as educated.

The units of appointment, attributes, and performance progress through the poems in the same sequence that they follow in the 'sentence'. Two more units remain: reputation and favour. As I have remarked, someone worthy of being celebrated in a poem is bound to have a good reputation among his peers. The purpose of the fourth and final couplets can simply be to honour a reputation.[47] Sometimes a reputation may be amplified by associating an official with the ruler's favour;[48] being an indispensable official clinches one's reputation among friends. One final couplet states that an imperial 'favour' must be repaid by further performance of one's duties.[49] And so the poems, like the units, can end as well as begin with the ruler, or sometimes 'the sage', in whose service good reputations are made. Good officials reflect their ruler, and Minh-tôn makes the same point in his statement in the obituary notice of 1357. But poems of discontent may displace the ruler in the final couplet with expressions of criticism or nostalgia for the past. Phạm Sư Mạnh and Chu Văn An shed their tears for Minh-tôn in their final couplets. Nguyễn Đán is similarly moved when he reads a collection of poems written in the 1285-1293 reign-period just before Anh-tôn's appointment as heir, and his fourth couplet is as follows:

After the civil examinations were over, one beheld military arts.

When can this old servant [of the dynasty] expect the return of those times?[50]

Nguyễn Phi Khanh's nostalgia and resentment in his fourth couplets

sometimes take the form of remembering when Nguyễn Đán, his father-in-law, still had influence at Court and held out the promise of good government.[51]

The narrative now reads as though it is celebrating as well as teaching a lesson of history, while the poems read as though they are teaching a lesson of history as well as celebrating those who illustrate it. Be this as it may, both genres adopt what I referred to earlier as an inevitable and commonsensical style of exposition, where the subject-matter deals either with attributes reflected in performance or with performance that results in different forms of acknowledgement. I have no reason for supposing that the same style of exposition cannot be found in Chinese poetry as well as in Ssù-ma Kuang's narrative. No limit need be assigned to the extent of the localised Chinese forms. The historian is interested in local statements behind foreign forms.

The congruence of presentation and especially of language in the two genres verifies the narrative's essential feature, which is the relationship between the ruler and his officials. To this extent, a continuity in the fourteenth century is established.

But the poets' nostalgia does not explain how the continuity was preserved. One explanation may be connected with how the sources, purporting to record happenings in Anh-tôn's and Minh-tôn's reigns, eventually reached the mid-fifteenth century compiler.

The precise nature of the compiler's sources is unknown. Events were certainly recorded in the first half of the fourteenth century. Đoàn Nhữ Hài's first duty in 1299 was to correct the *thực-lục* (The Veritable Records) of the reign. The usual assumption, however, is that the Trần records were destroyed during the Chams' sack of the capital in 1371 or confiscated by the Ming army of occupation in the early fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the 'sentence' may throw light on how at least some sources were formulated.

The three contiguous units in the 'sentence' after appointment are associated ones: attributes, performance, and reputation. These units situate an official in the set of relationships that constitute good government. The units in question would be of particular interest to officials, and the possibility arises that reputable careers and well-earned reputations in the 1293-1357 period and also instances of Minh-tôn's evaluation of his officials were remembered, discussed, assessed, and savoured by younger persons of the peer group in Minh-tôn's later years, communicated to the next generation, and sooner or later recorded.

An objection to this possibility could be that careers such as Trần Thì Kiến's ended very early in the fourteenth century and were forgotten not long afterwards. Yet the habit of reflecting on careers of former officials could begin as soon as educated commoners began to be promoted to senior posts. The success of the first generation of such men would be especially instructive as the earliest known examples of prospects awaiting talented men and the behaviour expected of them. The lampoon provoked by Đoàn Nhữ Hài's first appointment in 1299 is a glimpse of the stir that a young scholar's opportunity made on the eve of the fourteenth century. Nguyễn Trung Ngạn wrote a poem not many years later, and it is quoted in the narrative under the date of 1326 and also in the near-contemporary *Nam ông mộng lục*. The poem lists his early posts and is interesting because the poet records his age at each stage of his youthful career and is an

example of the promotions an official could expect when he was twenty-six years old, provided that he had ability. Ambitious young men later in Anh-tôn's reign (1293-1320) would have been unusually interested in the attributes, performance, and reputation of the pioneer generation of educated officials and could be expected to relay what they knew in order to encourage their own juniors. The result would be that what happened in the earlier years in the century could provide well-remembered examples of successful officials as well as of successful government and later become an important means of making comparisons between past and present.

With this possibility in mind, one can recall the narrative's reading modes. The units in the numerous pauses read as 'parts' of a whole (i.e. of good government) and require the reader to reflect on particular examples of officials who contributed to good government 'at that time'. The pauses are most frequent in 1323, 1326, and 1335 and not very long before conditions in the rural areas deteriorated. Good officials later in Minh-tôn's reign and especially thereafter would certainly have pondered the contrast between the earlier years of the century and the sequel and have no difficulty in enumerating the differences point by point (unit by unit). Perhaps some of the narrative's pauses originally took shape as a result of their reflections.

Examples of the technique of enumeration as a means of developing and emphasising a proposition are not unknown in the second half of the fourteenth century. Essays in rhyming prose (**phú**) tended to use the technique when, by means of Chinese classical allusions, they presented point by point the needs of the time. In the same way, the wife of Duệ-tôn (1373-1377), Nghệ-tôn's brother and heir, is supposed to have defined what her husband's priorities should be for the welfare of the State. Similarly, memories of Anh-tôn's and Minh-tôn's reigns, formulated in terms of attributes, performance, and reputation, could supply a systematically organised fund of experiences to be preserved among groups of students and young officials and in family histories and traditions, village temples (where some officials such as Đoàn Như Hải were eventually honoured as tutelary spirits), private memoirs, and oral tradition.

A possibility therefore exists that the narrative's sources were sometimes connected with how during and not long after Minh-tôn's reign events in the not so distant past ('at that time') were recalled and structured in men's memories.

One thing is certain. Materials about the 1293-1357 period were circulating by the beginning of the fifteenth century at the latest. The **Nam ông mộng lục**, compiled in China by Lê Trưng after he was captured in 1407 or so, contains biographical details which are occasionally almost identical in content, language, and unit-like presentation with what is read in the narrative. Evidently stereotyped stories about the first decades of the fourteenth century were available before Lê Trưng went into exile and when Phan Phu Tiên was a young man. Two features of the **Nam ông mộng lục** are worth noting briefly. The text reproduces the narrative's account, mentioned in Minh-tôn's obituary notice, of what happened in 1312, when Minh-tôn was officiating in the capital during his father's absence and shortly after his half-brother, the empress's son, was born. The **Nam ông mộng lục** concludes its account of the episode with saying that

scholarly people said of Minh-tôn that he respected *virtus* and made it shine. The narrative does not give this detail; Minh-tôn's direct discourse in the obituary notice would have done his behaviour in 1312 sufficient justice. Here, then, is one example of the way in which a happening early in the fourteenth century could be remembered and passed on when it illustrated exemplary conduct; Minh-tôn promised to withdraw when his half-brother was older. The other noteworthy feature of this text is that its stories about episodes before the fourteenth century deal with the imperial family and not with officials. The narrative for the earlier Trần period does likewise.[52]

If the genesis of the pauses' contents is connected with fond memories of successful officials in the first half of the fourteenth century, the famous teacher Chu Văn An (born towards the end of the thirteenth and dying in 1370) and Trần Nguyên Đán (1325-1390) were among those able and eager to comment on and pass on edifying episodes attributable to the earlier reigns. Their lives spanned the two contrasting epochs. Phạm Sư Mạnh and Lê Bá Quát could also have contributed to the process of transmission. They were still officials in Dụ-tôn's reign (1358-1369), when standards of government had declined. A curious feature of the narrative is that these two important officials' appointments are not followed by pauses, and one reason could be that they were unwilling or unable to use episodes in their own careers to illustrate good government. Mạnh's notions of how one should behave are registered in his poetry.

I have suggested a possibility arising from the fourteenth century continuity in notions of what constituted excellence in public life. When we read the narrative we may sometimes be reading how experiences of government under sage-like rulers with discernment and discrimination were recalled and transmitted. If this is so, what was transmitted would be already processed as lessons of history and lend itself as useful supplementary material for the official history of the Trần dynasty.

The possibility has arisen from the impression made by Anh-tôn's innovation, maintained by Minh-tôn, when he appointed educated men to posts with the promise of successful careers. The same impression suggests a further possibility. Anh-tôn's and Minh-tôn's reigns were remembered by those whose own times were out of joint. The ineffective Nghệ-tôn (1370-1394) could not even protect the Trần loyalists. Protesting officials and scholars often went into retreat to brood or were hounded from office, and some were killed. Lê Quý Ly's influence led to bitter factionalism. Village unrest increased. The Chams were on the offensive, and the new Ming dynasty in China was menacing.

The yearning for stable government was intense and is reflected in rhyming prose of the second half of the century. Moreover, a special formulation of good government became current under cover of an expression in the twenty-eighth chapter of a Chinese classical text, **The Doctrine of the Mean**. The expression is 'carriages and script'. The text insists that only the Son of Heaven (the ruler) fixes the measures (the carriages' axles) and determines the written characters. The expression signifies the ruler's authority when he established regulations that unified the country in China's golden age of high antiquity, and it corresponds with cultural well-being. The text qualifies the expression by adding that in 'all conduct [in the kingdom]

there are the same rules'. But, when Nguyễn Phi Khanh, in a poem to his brother in the later years of the century, appropriates the expression, he supplies a Vietnamese nuance by associating cultural well-being with territorial security. His poem refers to the Red River valley, where his brother is serving as an official, and the third and fourth couplets read:

For the heroes of a hundred years ago, here was a battlefield,  
For all time [this territory] has guaranteed the country's  
survival.

I rely on my poem to record the scene,  
[And] suggest that you are observing a country of carriages  
and script.[53]

Khanh is extolling a Vietnam where security during the Mongol wars ('a hundred years ago') had depended on strong government under the ruler. Nguyễn Đán's poem, already quoted above, recalls the same situation:

After the civil examinations were over, one beheld the  
military arts.

When can this old servant (of the dynasty) expect the return  
of those times?

In Đán's and Khanh's day security belonged to the past, and anxiety fanned the preoccupation with good government. When Phạm Sư Mạnh was quelling unrest in northwestern Vietnam, he wrote a poem in which he, too, used the expression 'script and carriages' in order to honour the ancient and unified kingdom of 'Văn-lang', and he emphasised the same consequence that Đán and Khanh did in respect of the thirteenth century: 'The frontier soil was peaceful'. [54] Văn-lang is briefly mentioned in early Chinese fragments, but the late fourteenth century *Việt sử lược* asserts that the kingdom flourished long before the beginning of any form of Chinese connection towards the end of the first millennium B.C. The *Việt sử lược* goes on to attribute to Văn-lang the use of 'knotted cords' for the purpose of government; according to the *Book of Changes*, the ancient Chinese rulers used knotted cords before script was introduced. The *Việt sử lược* as well as Đán, Khanh, and Mạnh supplies a Vietnamese nuance by recording that a Văn-lang king rejected the commands of the Yüeh king in China. These four writers are always associating localised Chinese materials about good government with the notion of territorial security in order to signify royal authority.

'Script and carriages' and also 'Văn-lang' are metaphors for good government, and they seem to become current only after Minh-tôn's death, though the Hùng kings, associated with Văn-lang, are mentioned in a *nôm* poem of the late thirteenth century. [55] I once assumed that Văn-lang represented a 'gut feeling' that obedience had always been the Vietnamese way of life. [56] My reading of the narrative now encourages me to suppose that the background to the metaphors should be sought in the perception of a dramatic contrast between the military victories over the Mongols in the thirteenth century and also the experience of effective government in the 1293-1357 period, when officials often distinguished themselves in battle, and the subsequent breakdown of government and vulnerability of the borders. The metaphors, with their discreetly tendentious meaning, reflect a strain in the minds of those who preferred to be unobstrusive and yet know that they were doing their

duty. Under cover of 'Vân-lang', they now mourned those days and were compelled to speak out against bad government. The metaphors of 'script and carriages' and 'Vân-lang' would be two instances of how officials were breaking their wonted silence.[57]

If this were so, the narrative's statement would no longer resemble an almost ideal version of government. Instead, it would articulate a particular and admirable historical experience sufficiently lively to take on the hue of a golden age and inspire metaphors for a well-ordered and undisturbed State. 'Carriages and script' and 'Vân-lang' would signify what Vietnam had been not long ago, and Anh-tôn's and Minh-tôn's superintendence of public life in the wake of the thirteenth century anxieties would have provided the model for an ideal government at the dawn of history. If this were how the two Trần reigns came to be remembered, one can understand why Trần loyalists were reluctant to throw in their lot with Lê Quý Ly even when Nghệ-tôn deserted them.

And so a reading of the narrative alongside the poems, with the disclosure of a fourteenth century continuity, has raised two possibilities: some of the narrative's sources were originally formulated during or not long after Minh-tôn's reign, and the genesis of the 'Vân-lang' metaphor was the enduring prestige of Anh-tôn's and Minh-tôn's style of government which succeeded the crises of the thirteenth century.

### Conclusion

The possibilities arose from experimenting with elementary procedures of structuralist criticism for describing, examining, and making sense of the text as a specimen of writing. The reading concerned itself with modes of presentation, narrational conventions and devices, and signifying systems, and the purpose was to discover structural features exhibited by a text intended to communicate a lesson of history. The procedures, synchronic in approach, excluded history-oriented enquiries such as particular historical topics, connections between events over time, and speculation about causes and effects. The attempt to describe the text disclosed a statement which described a set of relationships underlying the institution of government and also the linguistic signification of the two rulers in the 1293-1357 period. Texts of two different genres, the chronological narrative and some poems, were then read alongside each other, and the results of a modest venture into intertextual criticism spilt into history.

The reading, based on the available version of the text, was not interrupted by other preoccupations such as intellectual history or with historiographical questions such as reservations about the range of the text's contents or the accuracy of some of its details. The focus was always on what the text could yield about itself when routine reading procedures were used. Historical possibilities were mentioned only to make the point that the critic need not say goodbye to the historian.

The text's shape, influenced but not constrained by its genre, seems to be intelligible and probably less complex than other Vietnamese texts and almost certainly far less so than texts in neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, its critics may propose optional readings. The possibility of optional readings is part of a structuralist approach on condition that appeal is not made to some external reality which all readers are expected to acknowledge and invoke as a means of interpret-

ing the text. Interpretation involves reading between the lines and is not part of the structuralist enterprise.

The text reads as a specimen of writing that privileges a pause-riddled mode of narration and encourages the reader to brood over instances of performance in government rather than keep pace with swiftly moving events. Perhaps the effect is a consequence of the broodiness of those whose experiences and memories may be responsible for the pauses' contents, but this is only a possibility. The narrative is dominated by the presence of Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn, whose leadership is assumed to be beyond criticism except for the episode of 1328, and even then the blame is transferred to Trần Khắc Chung. The sudden reappearance of Minh-tôn's voice in his obituary notice is intended, I suggested, as a device to present the reigns of father and son as a long and unbroken experience of excellent government under wise rulers. An effect of the presentation may be that the brief and pause-less entries about civil unrest in the 1340's and 1350's do not distract and disturb the reader. The narrative has its own sense of 'objective reality'. Perhaps the narrative is also intended to convey the notion of a respite between the Mongol invasions of the second half of the thirteenth century and the disastrous decades towards the end of the fourteenth, but one need not insist on this point.

The narrating of the two wise rulers requires a rather excessive display of devices such as direct discourse, long obituary notices, anticipation and retrospection, contrived narration, and a pervasive use of linguistic equivalences for discernment and discrimination. The rulers' voices echo down the decades, and the only vocal competition comes from two abrasive officials. The emphatic device of 'thus' is used no less than three times in Anh-tôn's obituary notice to stress his good qualities. Instances are also found of another emphatic device, contrived narration - 'therefore this order', etc. - when the text wants to leave no doubt in the reader's mind that the rulers made appointments only when their officials had demonstrated good performance. One way of summarising the narrative's major lesson of history is that it illustrates the axiom that the necessary conditions of good government are supplied when shrewd rulers select reliable subordinates. The lesson is 'read' in the 'sentence' or 'statement' by means of the reading modes of metaphor and synecdoche.

Favours are not casually bestowed when Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn are ruling and are not for those who speak out of turn or seek personal merit; the downgrading of merit may reveal something about the prevalence of merit-seeking tendencies in fourteenth century Vietnam. From the narrative's point of view, Đoàn Nhữ Hài, dying in his fifties after a long and successful career, did not die in vain; by dying as he did, he provides an example of the futility of seeking extraordinary merit.

The narrative does not acknowledge major issues 'at that time'. Its structural emphasis is on how good government is conducted and not on defining good government,[58] and the perspective is appropriate for a chronological narrative in the genre established by Ssū-ma Kuang. Policy decisions are limited to matters of warfare and appointment of heirs. The mood is pragmatic. The ruler directs the government, and he is concerned with no more than the needs of the day or, when he chooses his heirs, the needs of the next generation.

The narrative calls attention to officials not as individuals with

private lives but as subordinate parts of the whole system of government. A consistently stark antithesis is made between impersonal silent officials and vociferous bad ones, whose private lives are criticised by their peers. The rulers and not their officials are the instrument for enunciating the practices of autocratic government at its best. By and large, the officials' role in the narrative is simply to perform their duties well and modestly and stand in good stead with their peers.

Officials do not utter the moralising values of the Confucianist persuasion. The narrative scarcely supports the hypothesis that this period sees a sudden upsurge of Confucianist notions. I ignored Trương Hán Siêu's temple inscription of 1339 written just before the outbreak of disturbances and quoted in his obituary notice of 1354. The inscription attacks lazy and cunning monks who are enticing villagers from their homes, and Siêu cites Mencius as a rhetorical device to reinforce his plea for village schools to teach the people their social duties. But the narrative diminishes the inscription's edifying effect by immediately continuing with a critical account of Siêu's unsatisfactory peer relations and private life. Siêu's learning is acknowledged, but the pause of 1326 invites the reader to attach more importance to Phạm Ngộ's behaviour in office than to his learning, which was inferior to Siêu's. If Siêu were really a 'Confucianist', he was ignored by his peers. His colleague, Lê Cu' Nhân, compared him with a football which frequently missed its goal. Nhân died the same year, and the narrative, after completing Siêu's obituary notice, goes on to quote Nhân as saying that an official should not fear his colleagues' criticism. 'One can observe (觀察) the kind of man Nhân was from what he said'. Nhân was granted posthumous promotion.

The text does not cause serious reading problems, but it may sometimes be in doubt about itself. This is a reason why alternative readings are needed. One obstacle it has to overcome is Minh-tôn's relationship with Trần Khắc Chung. Is Khắc Chung's flattery sufficient explanation? And why does the narrative never use the emphatic device of 'thus' to emphasise Minh-tôn's qualities? Minh-tôn's voice fades in the 1340's and 1350's. Perhaps his Court discourse was in fact becoming rarer. Some of his poems, attributable to the last years of his reign, show an affection for meditative Buddhism. The narrative ignores them and states that the dying ruler ordered his poems to be burnt. How, too, should one read entries recording social unrest? One entry of 1344 is interesting. Minh-tôn transferred Court *hành-khiển* to the executive branch of government, increased the provincial staff, and established twenty military stations in the provinces. The narrative may be uncertain how to narrate the reign's last years and prefers to depend on Minh-tôn's obituary notice to sustain his reputation. After all, Phan Phu Tiên, to whom I attribute the narrative's design, decided that the Trần dynasty began to fall into decline only after Minh-tôn died.

The essay has given attention to some of the conspicuous textual features and their effects which belong to the text's properties and have helped to bring to the surface a set of relationships that constitute good government in the 1293-1357 period. These properties disclose something the narrative takes for granted: the linguistic idiom which it understands and assumes on behalf of the rulers and officials. The objection may be raised that the idiom of a didactic text is likely to be contrived, but the *genre's* convention is to allow facts to speak for themselves. The idiom would, of course, be only part of the total idiom



current at the time, but the narrative is at pains to appropriate it.

The narrative furnishes a 'fact' about itself when it reveals what it assumes to be the natural linguistic idiom for its purposes. Whether or not the same 'fact' is revealed in writings of other cultures is not my business. Would, for example, the combinable associations in the sequence of ruler-official relationships make any sense in neighbouring cultures, would there have to be modifications or drastic displacements, or would the associations have any meaning at all?

As far as fourteenth century Vietnam is concerned, the idiom is not the end of the matter; it can be brought into relationship with other facts and usually facts available in the narrative's own plentiful details. As a long shot, one may enquire whether a connection exists between the impersonal posture of the good officials and the annihilistic teachings of meditative Buddhism. The poets, in their fourth couplets, sometimes find peace in a monk's company.

A text's 'facts' can also alert one to change. The mid-Trần years have tended to be wedged rather ambiguously or even anonymously between the dramatic Mongol wars of the thirteenth-century and the decline and fall of the Trần dynasty. The narrative's idiom, one of its 'facts', indicates that the mid-Trần years were a time of memorable change because not a few educated officials had the confidence of Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn. Protests later in the century were pleas for the renewal of the relationship, and this is probably how the dynasty's restoration under Nguyễn-ton in 1370 was seen at the time. I do not know what scale of change should be associated with the usurper Lê Quý Ly (1400-1407), but I am inclined to suppose that the ruler-official relationship developed by Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn was maintained, albeit with officials prepared to serve the usurper. But the innovation which the Trần loyalists hoped would become permanent was accompanied by another change, which was the collapse of government in the villages. The question may therefore be asked how, if at all, the denouement in the fifteenth century should be identified against its fourteenth century background. Is an outline of the 'sentence', perhaps with hyphenated amplifications, still structured in fifteenth century texts? What eventually happened to the change inaugurated by Anh-tôn and maintained by Minh-tôn?

Texts, read as texts, possess an historical facticity of their own in the sense that they are capable of yielding information about themselves. The facts reside in their properties, and this means that consideration can be given to how a text 'reads'. A text, as well as being used, needs to be read as an artifact, as it surely is, and the reading process is one of dismantling it in order to understand how and with what effect it is put together. The process of dismantling makes sense of the artifact, and the text's facticity lies somewhere in the assemblage of its parts. This kind of facticity can be borne in mind when testing generalised statements alongside what 'texts' at particular times and with particular assumptions may say.

I apologise for writing a long essay. Trying to describe a text is bound to be a lengthy business because the critic has an obligation to explain stage by stage how he is trying to account for its features. But my final word is again to insist that other structuralist readings of this text should be undertaken. The analysis of its signifying systems may be questioned, and other systems may be discovered to maximise the text's rich facticity. The prospect of finding richness

deserves to be stressed. Structuralist procedures are not handy means of achieving quick results with the minimum of effort. A text has the richness of a tapestry, and its unweaving need not to be a waste of the historian's time.

## Appendix 'A'

Ngô Sĩ Liên tells us no more than that he filled gaps, repaired deficiencies of composition, and corrected improper terminology, and we do not know to what extent he felt it necessary to change Phan Phu Tiên's text written less than thirty years earlier. Two of Liên's numerous comments indicate that he had read what Tiên had written as we do today. Liên's commentary under the date of 1320, the date of Anh-tôn's death, states: 'I read the section on Anh-tôn and saw that he changed his faults "without demur". The narrative, under the date of 1299, has recorded that the ruler gave up drinking, and Anh-tôn's obituary notice mentions this episode and states that he changed his faults 'without demur'. In a commentary under the date of 1400 Tiên cites Ssũ-ma Kuang, and Liên, in his commentary under the same date, observes that 'Phu Tiên followed Ssũ-ma Kuang's view'.

Liên drew up a list of twenty-four editorial rules in the tradition of Chu Hsi's rules when writing the *Tzũ-chih t'ung-chien kang-mu*, and one rule probably indicates a change Liên made in Tiên's work. The rule eliminates the reign of the usurper Nhật Lê (1369-1370), and the present version of the narrative does likewise. The eighth rule requires that the corresponding Northern (Chinese) reign-period dates should be given as well as the Vietnamese ones, and the present version conforms to this rule. But Tiên may have already done so.

Two inter-linear footnotes in the narrative for 1232 and 1252 comment on the accuracy of details in Phan Phu Tiên's work. The origin of the footnotes deserves study. At least four such notes appear in Liên's commentaries and could hardly have been his. Some notes explain the pronunciation or meaning of words or supply supplementary information about persons mentioned in the narrative such as where they were born. I suspect that these notes were written after Liên's time and that the long notes at the beginning of each reign were also written after Liên's time.

I am interested in reading the present narrative and find that I have to choose between Tiên and Liên as the person responsible for the text's coherence and readability. I choose Tiên, though I shall usually refer to 'the narrative' rather than to him.

## Appendix 'B'

## Distribution of units

- 1 = the ruler appointed (or equivalences of 'appointed')  
 2 = attributes  
 3 = performance  
 4 = reputation  
 5 = favour

## Entries with two or more units

1. 1298 (Trần Thì Kiến) 1, 5.  
 2. 1304 (Bùi Mộc Đạc) 1, 2, 5 (the ruler gave him an auspicious surname. Many with his former surname changed it accordingly).  
 3. 1304 (Đoàn Nhữ Hải) 1, 2 (a scholar's ability and superior to that of a prince), 5 (promoted because of his ability).

## Two or more units in entries followed by pauses

4. 1297 (Trần Thì Kiến) **Entry:** 1. **Pause:** 2, 3, 4.  
 5. 1299 (Đoàn Nhữ Hải) **Entry:** 1. **Pause:** 2 (a scholar whom Anh-tôn used for writing a letter of apology to Nhân-tôn), 3 (the success of the letter and therefore Hải's performance), 5 (Nhân-tôn complimented Hải and Anh-tôn gave him the appointment). **Another pause:** 2 (Hải's youthful attributes are lampooned), 3 (Hải's rapport with Anh-tôn = performance, and his performance in his new post.)  
 6. 1301 (Trần Thì Kiến) **Entry:** 1. **Pause:** 3 (he had been removed from a post because his performance was considered unsatisfactory), 5 (the ruler reconsidered the matter and made the appointment; i.e. the ruler had extended the favour of reconsidering the case).  
 7. 1303 (Đoàn Nhữ Hải) **Entry:** 1. **Pause:** 1 (Hải had previously been sent to Champa as envoy), 2 (Nhân-tôn spoke well of his attributes and approved of the appointment). **Another pause:** 3 (Hải's conduct in Champa), 5 (Anh-tôn's congratulations

and resolve to make great use of him:  
hence the appointment in the entry).

8. 1305 (Trần Cự) **Entry:** 1 (about Trần Thị Kiến's appointment and nothing to do with the pause). **Pause:** 2 (the attributes of Trần Cự, a teacher), 3, 4.
9. 1310 (Trịnh Trọng Tử) **Entry:** Nhân-tôn's burial alongside his wife. **Pause:** 3 (the official's resourcefulness during the ceremony), 4, 5.
10. 1312 (Đoàn Nhữ Hải) **Entry:** the surrender of the Cham ruler. **Pause:** 1 (Hải's appointment to negotiate the ruler's submission), 3 (his successful performance. He was entirely responsible for the bloodless pacification of Champa).
11. 1313 (Đỗ Thiên Hứ) **Entry:** 1. **Pause:** 3 (his services in Champa. Later Minh-tôn used him as an expert on 'western' border affairs).
12. 1316 (Nguyễn Bính) **Entry:** 1 (appointed to a subordinate post under a prince), 3 (he handed in all the taxes), 5 (the ruler knew that he would do so and did not receive the taxes in person: i.e. he favoured Bính by not casting doubt on his performance). The entry ends with (也). **Pause:** 1 (Bính was in the senior emperor's entourage) 2 (his pure and resolute attributes). **Another pause** indicated by 'in the past': 3 (his honest performance as an envoy to China), 5 (Anh-tôn congratulated and promoted him because he was 'pure and resolute').
13. 1317 (Phí Trực) **Entry:** 1 (he was chosen to accompany Anh-tôn to the Trần ancestral village and was appointed to a vacant post there). **Pause:** 3 (Trực eventually identified a gang's leader, though Anh-tôn became impatient), 5 (the ruler congratulated him on his ability).
14. 1320 (Trần Hộ) **Entry:** Anh-tôn's obituary notice. **Pause:** 3 (when the ruler's corpse was conveyed downriver, Hộ adhered to Court protocol by granting the empress a larger escort to distinguish her rank from that of Minh-tôn's mother, a secondary wife),

5 (Minh-tôn praised him for his 'loyalty').

15. 1323 (Nguyễn Dũ and others)

**Entry:** an edict about land disputes. 3 (Dũ's procedure had been followed). I read the entry as ending with (也). If this is so, a **pause** follows: 3 (Dũ's performance is similar to that of Đỗ Thiên Hứ. When Thiên Hứ vacated his post in Nghệ-an, the ruler ordered Dũ to succeed him, and the Chams continued to submit). **Another pause:** 1 (a list of thirteen officials who followed each other in Court posts), 2 (their ability combined elegance and solidity in equal proportions). I take it that this pause ends with (矣). **Another pause** concerns the two Phạm brothers (mentioned in the list). Their names are explained. The pause continues with Phạm Mại: 2 (his good influence and willingness to speak out), 3 ('afterwards' he held an important post but was removed from it not many years later). **Another pause** briefly mentions Nguyễn Trung Ngạn, also in the list. He refused to accept an appointment under Anh-tôn. **Another pause** deals with Mạc Dĩnh Chi (also in the list): 2 (very honest), 3 (he was successfully tested by the ruler), 5 (his later appointments, which I take to be marks of the ruler's continuing favour).

16. 1326 (Bùi Mộc Đạc)

**Entry:** he died. **Pause:** 2 (Anh-tôn on his death bed in 1320 recalled that this official had served three rulers, was respectful, and had other good qualities), 5 (Anh-tôn urged Minh-tôn to treat him well. Minh-tôn intended to make great use of him, but the official died).

17. 1326 (Nguyễn Trung Ngạn and others)

**Entry:** 1 (Ngạn was demoted), 2 (his carelessness, which the ruler did not judge to be too serious because he had ability. Ngạn's boastful attributes, illustrated by a poem to advertise his *cursus honorum*), 3 (Ngạn's later posts), 4 (his reputation as a scholar and poet). **Pause:** 2 (the ruler rebuked Trương Hán Siêu for arrogance in accusing Phạm Ngộ and Lê Duy of accepting bribes). **Another pause** introduced by 'not long afterwards': 1 (Phạm Ngộ's appointment to a post identical in status with Siêu's),

2 (Ngộ's scholarly attributes were not equal to Siêu's), 3 (but he occupied his post in a 'pure and respectful' manner), 4 (he had a reputation at the time).

18. 1328 (Lê Duy)

**Entry:** the ruler's father-in-law was killed. **Pause:** a long account of the circumstances of this event. **Another pause** introduced by 'later': 1 (Lê Duy held an enquiry), 2 (he was stubbornly straightforward), 3 (as a result of his enquiry the true facts of the case were established).

19. 1335 (Đoàn Như Hải)

**Entry:** the ruler went on campaign and was defeated. Hải was killed. **Pause:** the reasons are given why the ruler did not postpone the campaign. **Another pause:** 1 (Hải had been appointed in charge of an army), 3 (there is a long account of what Hải did to achieve extraordinary merit, as a result of which he was killed), 5 (the ruler did not admire him for trying to achieve too much).

1335 (Đỗ Thiên Hứ)

**Pause:** 1 (when the ruler was on campaign, Đỗ Thiên Hứ had a military command), 3 (he was ill but requested the ruler to allow him to go into battle on his sick bed), 5 (the ruler congratulated him on his 'determination' and ordered special funeral rites in his honour when he died).

(Phạm Thương Cối)

**Pause:** 2 (his peaceful attributes. He did not seek merit in warfare to outshine others), 5 (Minh-tôn praised him).

## NOTES

1. I am grateful for Anthony Day for valuable comments on an earlier draft.
2. I have used a microfilm of the Toyo Bunko copy of the Kōng-yǎn-kim Library text (undated).
3. See Appendix 'A' for a few preliminary comments on the relationship between Phan Phu Tiên's and Ngô Sĩ Liên's work.
4. E.G. Pulleyblank, 'Chinese historical criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssū-ma Kuang', *Historians of China and Japan* (ed. W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank), Oxford University Press, London, 1961, p.153; Ming K. Chan, 'The historiography of the Tzū-chih T'ung-chien', *Monumenta Serica*, 31, (1974-1975), p.2.
5. The Chinese and Vietnamese narratives sometimes refer to 'the old system of government' and date some innovations.
6. Ming K. Chan, *op.cit.*, p.16.
7. Under the date of 1392, Tiên's commentary deplores the neglected defences on the Cham border during Dụ-tôn's dissolute reign, and the narrative for 1371, recording a Cham attack, supplies what seems to be an instance of contrived narrative: 'The borders were unprotected at the time ...'. Dụ-tôn died two years earlier. The commentary and narrative are consistent and seem to identify commentator with compiler at least in this part of the annals.
8. Ming K. Chan, *op.cit.*, p.32.
9. I have not discovered in the narrative the terms 'human relations' (人倫) and 'human feelings' (人情) though they appear in Ngô Sĩ Liên's explicitly didactic commentaries.
10. Appendix 'B' enumerates entries and entries followed by pauses in which two or more of the five units appear during the 1293-1357 period.
11. A metaphor is based on a proposed similarity or analogy between the literal subject and its metaphorical substitute or equivalence. The units in the entries read either as a short or a more extended metaphor for well-conducted government. In the pauses, following the entries' unit of 'appointment', units associated with good government replace the metaphor: i.e. parts are replacing the whole in what is known as synecdoche. See Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, University of California Press, 1977, pp.77-79.
12. I refer to the *Nam ông mộng lục* in note 52. This event probably created a major sensation at the time. Nguyễn Trung Ngạn, who was an official in 1328, later wrote a poem on the father-in-law's tomb and deplored the prince's unjust fate.
13. Ming K. Chan, *op.cit.*, pp.4-5.
14. In 1326 and 1337 Minh-tôn disparaged claims to merit.
15. Nghệ-tôn (1370-1394), on the contrary, is consistently signified as being indiscriminating. He 'did not comprehend' (不識) and was 'misled' (誤).



16. See Appendix 'B' under the dates of 1301 and 1317 for instances of Anh-tôn's capacity for reconsidering situations.
17. The rulers' relationships with members of their family may disclose a further signifying system based on the language of human emotions such as 'loving' and 'being angry'. Another possibility is the conventional language used for narrating campaigns. In the symposium paper by Dr Keith Taylor published in this volume, it is observed that the Lý annals record the eleventh century expeditions to Champa in a manner designed to glorify the supernatural powers of the kings. Local spirits assisted Anh-tôn and Minh-tôn in their campaigns of 1312 and 1329.
18. James Legge, **The Chinese Classics. III. The Shoo King**, Hong Kong reprint, 1960, p.156. The reference is to Tai K'ang.
19. In 1342 he defended his right to enter the censorate. In 1347 he punished a prince for stealing clothing reserved for the palace. In 1356, when he became ill after visiting his murdered father-in-law's grave, he told the empress not to wear mourning for a mother; his mother was still alive.
20. A footnote in the narrative under the date of 1299 states that 'in the old history' (Phan Phu Tiên's?) the episode about Đoàn Như Hải in 1299 was recorded under the date of 1357, when Minh-tôn died. In 1299 Hải was instructed to correct the reign's records (**Thực-lục**), and one reason for the instruction may be that he was expected to delete any reference to Anh-tôn's drunkenness that year. What happened in 1299 was apparently known to the compiler, and he could have relegated it to Minh-tôn's obituary notice as an opportunity for recording the ruler's sagacious discourse when Hải was killed in 1335 after seeking extraordinary merit. In the same way the obituary notice records the youthful Minh-tôn's wise remarks in 1312, when he explained that he would withdraw when his infant half-brother was older. The obituary notice is packed with the ruler's direct discourse, and the beginning of Hải's career in 1299 could have originally appeared in it for the same reason.
21. Vietnamese historians today categorise these developments as the beginning of 'the social crisis' that plagued Vietnam thereafter.
22. The concern of father and son for Court protocol is illustrated in Anh-tôn's obituary notice of 1320 and in the narrative for the same year concerning the removal of Anh-tôn's corpse down river. Phan Phu Tiên in his commentary of 1357 notes that Minh-tôn did not change the system of laws, and the laws would include Court regulations.
23. Minh-tôn is occasionally mentioned in retrospect and in contexts not too favourable to him. In 1371 Lê Quý Ly's fateful connection with the imperial family is traced back to Minh-tôn's marriages. An omen early in the reign is reserved for 1369. The narrative ignores an omen of about 1329, mentioned in the **Nam ông mộng lục** and foretelling Nghệ-tôn's succession to the throne. The omens worried Minh-tôn because they threatened his family with dynastic problems after his death. Recording these omens during his reign would disturb the effect of a reign that guaranteed the dynasty's stability under a ruler who was free from superstition and took care to educate his sons. The closest the narrative gets to anticipating the future is when it states that Minh-tôn hated the doctor in charge of his impotent son, Dụ-tôn.
24. Ming K. Chan, op.cit., p.15.
25. Ibid, p.12.

26. See James Legge, *op.cit.*, [I], p.156. For another allusion to the *Shu-ching*, see *Thơ-văn Lý-Trần (TVLT)*, Nhà xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, vol. 3, Hanoi, 1978, p. 106. The allusion is to Dương Cốc, where the Chinese sage-ruler Yao announced the beginning of spring activities by means of the rising sun. Phạm Sư Mạnh appropriates the allusion to glorify the associations of the area where the final victory over the Mongols took place in 1288.
27. James Legge, *op.cit.*, p.250.
28. *Ibid*, p.262 and also p.253, where Legge corrects Medhurst's translation to read: 'When the ministers see that the sovereign yields himself to be moulded by them - i.e. like wood in the hands of a carpenter - they are encouraged to be assiduous in doing their duty'. Minh-tôn would not have agreed. Though Trần rulers incorporated the sage-ruler Yao's name in their titles when they became senior emperors, they did not model their relations with officials on Yao's benign and passive example. This practice began in 1258 when Trần Thái-tôn became senior emperor. The senior emperors were known as 'Yao' because their heirs, who took over much of the burden of government from their fathers, were, by analogy, 'Shuns'. Shun, though not Yao's son, governed on his behalf.
29. For example, down-playing merit, the recruitment of men with 'ability', careful selection of heirs, and prudent behaviour of imperial consorts; see John K. Whitmore, *The development of Lê government in fifteenth century Vietnam*, Cornell PhD thesis, Ithaca, 1968: 'Merit subjects: China, Korea, Vietnam', *Ming Studies*, 9 (1979), pp.42-51.
30. *TVLT*, vol.3, pp.84-85.
31. *TVLT*, vol.3, pp.62-63.
32. O.W. Wolters, 'Celebrating the educated official', *The Vietnam Forum*, 2 (1983), p.94.
33. The poets in question are Phạm Sư Mạnh, Trần Nguyên Đán, and Nguyễn Phi Khanh.
34. Wolters, 'Celebrating the educated official', p.94.
35. O.W. Wolters, 'Phạm Sư Mạnh's poems written while patrolling the Vietnamese northern border', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, XIII, 1 (1982), p.117.
36. Wolters, 'Celebrating the educated official', p.94.
37. *Ibid*, p.92.
38. *Ibid*, p.92.
39. *Ibid*, p.93.
40. *TVLT*, vol.3, pp.173-174.
41. This passage is reproduced in the *Nam ông mộng lục*. See note 52.
42. *TVLT*, vol.3, pp.165-166.
43. Wolters, 'Celebrating the educated official', p.94.

44. TVLT, vol.3, pp.204-205.
45. TVLT, vol.3, pp.174-175.
46. Wolters, 'Celebrating the educated official', p.87.
47. Ibid, p.95 (XII), p.96 (XIII).
48. Ibid, p.94 (X), p.96 (XIV).
49. Ibid, p.95 (XI). Phạm Sư Mạnh's poems sometimes end with referring to his loyal service.
50. TVTL, vol.3, pp.196-197.
51. Wolters, 'Celebrating the educated official', p.93 (VIII).
52. The **Nam ông mộng lục** was known to but not cited by Lê Quý Đôn in the eighteenth century. Similarity in the contents of the narrative and the **Nam ông mộng lục** can be seen in the latter's materials on Anh-tôn, Minh-tôn, Nguyễn Trung Ngạn, Phạm Mại, and Chu Văn An. An instance of record keeping for didactic purposes is mentioned in the narrative for 1383, when Đào Sư Tích was invited by Nghệ-tôn to a conference to discuss 'old events'. Đào Sư Tích then wrote a preface for the eight volumes that emerged in order 'to instruct the heir'. Again, an entry in the narrative for 1385 states that Nguyễn Đán retired to the country. A pause follows: 'At that time worthies and "perfect men" grieved over the times and mourned their generation. They had to express their grief in poems'. The reflections of these men would help to account for materials in both the **Nam ông mộng lục** and the narrative. Another way in which memories would be transmitted is suggested by the narrative's reference to the censor Trương Đổ under the date of 1377; we are told that Đổ's grandson was as honourable as Đổ. Phan Phu Tiên probably knew the grandson and could tap stories about his grandfather. Tiên's compilation of poems may also have given him access to family traditions.
53. TVLT, vol.3, no.453.
54. Wolters, 'Phạm Sư Mạnh's poems', p.117.
55. Artifacts recovered from the site of the Hùng kings' shrine in north-western Vietnam show that the kings were venerated long before any question of 'Văn-lang' arose.
56. O.W. Wolters, 'Assertions of cultural well-being in fourteenth century Vietnam. Part II', *JSEAS*, XI, (1980), p.86.
57. I believe that officials mentioned in accounts of Văn-lang were as unobtrusive as those in the 1293-1357 period, but this aspect of the Văn-lang saga needs further study.
58. The annalist's emphasis resembles Prapañca's in the **Nāgarakērtāgama**. An eighteenth century Balinese copyist decided to call the poem 'A Book of Learning on the Order of the Realm', but the poet's title was 'The Description of the Country'. Prapañca was not interested in laying down rules on how to govern but in what happened when Java was well governed.

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